



yourmaidstone

THE ONLINE NEWSPAPER FOR MAIDSTONE, MALLING, LARKFIELD AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

www.kentnews.co.uk

Issue no 222

It's official, we're one of the top ten towns in the UK

By Rob Colman

yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk

MAIDSTONE has been named as the eighth best place to live in the UK.

The annual top-50 study carried out by the Halifax saw our town beat off the challenge of the likes of Tunbridge Wells in 12th, Ashford (27), Sevenoaks (38), Tonbridge and Malling (46), and Gravesham (49).

Maidstone Borough Council leader Cllr Chris Garland said: "We already knew our borough was a desirable place but it is great to have it confirmed by an independent survey.

"It will help to sell the county town as a great place for business. Economic prosperity is our number one priority and

we scored particularly well for our employment rate; 84 per cent – the best in the UK."

Towns were ranked on a number of factors, including weekly average earnings; home size; number of vacant properties; broadband access; house prices; traffic flows; crime rates; health; exam results; and the weather.

The council's cabinet member for economic development and transport, Cllr Malcolm Greer, said: "This is good news and confirms what many residents will know already, Maidstone is a very desirable location to live.

Turn to page 11 to find out what you thought when we took to the streets to get your views on our town.



Academy to host party for Chinese New Year

FOR FULL STORY SEE BELOW

ENTERTAINMENT

Community is invited to join year of the dragon celebration

HUNDREDS of people are set to descend on the New Line Learning Academy next week for a very special event to mark the Chinese New Year.

The academy, which teaches all Year Seven and Eight students Mandarin as a compulsory subject, will be hosting the event next Tuesday, January 17. The new Tiger Primary School is also set to teach Mandarin.

Among the attractions will be a performance by a professional Chinese dance troupe, with the doors open for anyone from the community who wishes to attend.

The evening, which gets under way at 6.30pm, will be a celebration of Chinese culture and include dance, music and martial arts displays.

The academy in Boughton Lane is

also one of 272 Confucius Classrooms, from 88 countries around the world. This means it receives support from the Office of Chinese Language Council, along with help from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

A spokeswoman said: "The evening is set to be a celebration of Chinese culture.

The event is free and we look forward

to seeing as many visitors as possible.

"The academy also runs a Chinese Saturday School, where children and adults have the opportunity to learn Mandarin and find out more about Chinese traditions and culture."

For more information about the event or how to get involved email community@futureschooltrust.com or call 01622 743286 extension 213.

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RIP

Quiz master dies in sleep

VETERAN broadcaster Bob Holness, who died last week at the age of 83 was a former student at the Maidstone College of Art.

The Blockbusters host died peacefully in his sleep last Friday. After being born in South Africa his family moved to Herne Bay and then Ashford.

VOLUNTEER

Scouts thrilled by royal boost

THE Scouts' top figure in Kent says news the Duchess of Cambridge is set to become a volunteer leader in the Scout Association is a "tremendous boost".

County commissioner for Kent, Harvey Kennett from Maidstone said: "The Duchess will inspire everyone."

SPORT

Cash boost for football club

MAIDSTONE United will recoup a six-figure sum for selling the naming rights to their new stadium.

The club, who are due to end their long exile from the county town next season, have agreed a £150,000 deal with the Gallagher Group.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Rink's off after proving a hit

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE town's winter ice rink welcomes its final skaters this weekend, with council chiefs hailing its stay a great success.

More than 25,000 tickets have been sold since it was first unveiled at the end of November – a figure which seems almost certain to smooth the way for it to return once again later this year.

The rink in Calverley Grounds was designed to provide a boost to traders in the traditionally busy Christmas period, pulling in shoppers from across Kent and East Sussex to enjoy the town's big and small shops, and enjoy a classic winter past-time.

Catherine Mayhew, the council's portfolio holder for tourism, leisure and economic development, said: "With over 25,000 tickets sold it is clear that the ice rink has been a great success.

"It has been a real pleasure for me to visit Calverley Grounds over the Christmas period and see the fun and excitement which the rink has brought to our residents and visitors. The number of people in the vicinity of the rink must have been good for local businesses too.

"Following this success I am hoping to see the ice rink back next year."

Its triumph comes despite an opening week which was dogged by problems as unseasonably warm weather played havoc with the ice.

After a successful opening night, the warmer than expected weather and strong winds meant the ice could not set – forcing the rink to be closed to the public on health and safety grounds. It was one of a number of real ice rinks across the



COOL: Rink in Calverley Grounds shuts this weekend after entertaining more than 25,000 skaters

country which suffered from the problem.

Yet once the temperatures dipped, it was all systems go and the problem did not reoccur.

Initially set to end its run last weekend, the council granted it permission to stay open for a further week in order to help make-up for lost revenues during the first week.

The rink was run by Cousins Entertainment, a

firm co-owned by Olympic gold medal-winning skater Robin Cousins, who will be back on TV screens this month as *Dancing on Ice*, in which he is one of the judges, gets under way on ITV1.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council subsidised the rink this year. It says no definite decision on its return will be made until later in the year.

The rink closes on Sunday.

LOTTERY

Could it be you sitting on £1million unclaimed lottery jackpot prize?

SOMEONE in Tonbridge is sitting on a £1million lottery fortune – but after two weeks they have still not come forward to claim their prize pot.

Now the National Lottery is appealing for anyone who bought a ticket in the Tonbridge and Malling area for the draw on December 23 to check in case they have become a millionaire.

The draw in the EuroMillions Millionaire Raffle on that date created 25 millionaires.

For every EuroMillions line played, UK players automatically receive a EuroMillions Millionaire Raffle selection printed on their ticket. The winning selection on Friday December 23 was FYD286530.

The lucky ticket-holder has until 11pm on Wednesday June 20 to make their claim.

If no-one comes forward with the winning ticket before the prize claim deadline, then the prize money, plus all the interest the prize has generated, will go to good causes – adding to the £27 billion already raised through sales of lottery tickets since the lottery launched in November 1994.

A spokesperson said: "We're desperate to find this mystery ticket-holder and unite them with their winnings – this amazing prize could really make a huge difference to somebody's life as they start 2012."

"We're urging everyone to check their old EuroMillions tickets again."

Anyone who believes they have the winning ticket should call 0845 910 0000.

EDUCATION

Petition forces KCC grammar school debate

EDUCATION chiefs have confirmed a date for a debate on grammar school provision in Sevenoaks.

The move follows pressure from a parent group who set up an e-petition on the Kent County Council website, attracting more than 1,000 signatures and securing a debate at County Hall.

The petition called on the council to establish a grammar in Sevenoaks. The debate is due to be held on March 29.

It is only the second time an e-petition of this

kind has been successful, the first being over the Kent Freedom Pass.

Campaigner Sarah Shilling said she was feeling confident the debate could help pave the way for a grammar school in the town.

Around 1,150 children travel to grammar schools in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells – a round trip of 25 miles.

Mrs Shilling said: "This has been going on a long time. This petition shows how much support there is and I'm feeling confident about the debate."

NEWS IN BRIEF

► Police injury charge

A 30-year-old man from Norwich has been charged over an incident which left a police officer injured after being hit by a car in Tunbridge Wells last month.

Stephen John Fahri was charged with GBH with intent to resist arrest, dangerous driving, theft, making off without payment and common assault, following the incident in Southborough on December 9. A woman, 30, from Beckenham has been bailed on suspicion of harbouring a criminal.

► OAP's home hit by tree

A PENSIONER had a narrow escape on Tuesday morning when high winds blew a tree onto her house.

Emergency teams received a call just before 7am after a tree fell on the property in Chevening, near Sevenoaks.

The resident of the property, an elderly woman, was led to safety by fire crews and taken to hospital in an ambulance. She is not thought to be badly hurt.

► £150k stadium deal

MAIDSTONE United Football Club has netted a £150,000 naming rights deal for its new stadium.

The Ryman League club signed a five-year contract with construction firm Gallagher Group for its new ground, currently under construction at James Whatman Way.

It means the ground will be known as The Gallagher Stadium for the first five years of its opening. The stadium, due to open in July, will feature a synthetic 3G pitch.

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HEALTH CARE

NHS vows to recover massive debts owed by foreign patients

By Rob Colman

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

HEALTH chiefs are calling in debt collectors to recover hundreds of thousands of pounds from foreign nationals who have received free NHS treatment without being eligible.

Overseas patients owe NHS trusts large sums of money after receiving emergency treatment and returning home without paying.

It is believed that £30 million is owed to the NHS nationally by patients coming in from non-EU countries.

Hospital administrators say improving collections, and decreasing bad debt, is one of their top business priorities.

And immigration minister and Ashford Tory MP Damian Green has announced that foreign nationals known to owe the NHS more than £1,000 will be denied entry to the UK until they pay up, but while this will catch some offenders, this assumes that people have left and are trying to return.

Mr Green said: "It shows how big a problem this matter is, we have a national health service, not an international

health service. It's also a sign of how desperate these hospitals are in a most difficult time, they have the Government's full support to recover these debts.

"This will hopefully stop people who are deliberately setting out to abuse our system."

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust is owed £40,833 for 2010-11 by overseas patients.

The Trust said: "We actively pursue outstanding payments from overseas patients, who have received treatment while not qualifying under the NHS terms, and we will continue to do so whenever and wherever possible."

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, which uses debt recovery firm CCR Legal, is owed £104,000 by overseas patients for the five years to 2011.

Medway NHS Trust said it had further strengthened its procedures for managing activity from overseas patients.

A spokesman said: "This includes identifying all overseas patients who enter the hospital in a timely manner and their liability to pay treatment costs.

"Many patients undergoing a planned procedure are re-



HIGH COST: NHS is getting tough on unpaid bills

ROYAL MAIL

250 Royal Mail employees to quit as service faces modernisation

A MAJOR reorganisation of the postal service in Kent is coming to a head following an investment of more than £70 million.

Some 250 people will be left out of work, and the union said it was regrettable but unavoidable.

A new Royal Mail flagship hub is set to open soon in Medway. The mail centre replaces out of date sites in Dartford, Canterbury, Tonbridge and Maidstone, and was built partly because the company nationally is now handling 18 million fewer daily letters than it was five years ago.

As well as this merger, Royal Mail is changing some of its smaller delivery offices.

Planning permission has been granted for a £1.5m delivery office in Park Wood, Maidstone, and building work starts within weeks with an opening date planned for October. Once operational, the current Maidstone sites will be sold.

The new centre will house two compact sequence sorting machines which can organise mail at a rate of 40,000 items an hour.

The current mail centres at Canterbury, Dartford and Tonbridge will be retained to become delivery hubs. Canterbury will also take over from sites in Whitstable and Herne Bay, and Tonbridge will take over from Tunbridge Wells.

Royal Mail said the Communication Workers Union recognised in the Business Transformation 2010 and Beyond Agreement that the company needs to review the number of mail centres it operates. There is growing competi-



FUTURE:

A new mail centre has been built to help Royal Mail meet modern demands

tion from electronic media and other carriers.

David Banbury, the Kent spokesman for the Communications Workers Union said: "There are job losses – voluntary redundancy.

"There is an agreement there would be no compulsory redundancies. It is regrettable, but unfortunately when you reorganise like this and introduce modern machinery it is unavoidable."

Royal Mail's South East England regional operations director, Tom Willis, said: "The changes we are making to our operations are vital to put Royal Mail on a secure and sustainable footing. As part of our investment and modernisation programme across the UK, we are investing in new technology and equipment and upgraded operational facilities."

And Steve Nelson, Royal Mail's delivery office manager at Maidstone, said: "Customers can be assured that Royal Mail will make every effort to minimise any disruption to customers when this relocation goes ahead."

NEWS IN BRIEF

► Woman fights for life

A WOMAN was fighting for her life in hospital after being hit by a car in the Bluewater car park. The incident occurred on level one of the blue car park at the shopping centre near Greenhithe at around 3pm on Wednesday. The 65-year-old woman pedestrian was hit by a silver Vauxhall Zafira, which was also in collision with four parked vehicles. The woman, who is from Bexleyheath, suffered life-threatening injuries and was air lifted to a London hospital.

► Parking fees doubled

CAR parking fees have been doubled by Gravesham Council, and motorists now have to pay £2 for four hours in the town centre.

And shoppers – who have enjoyed the rare luxury of free parking anywhere in the town at weekends – will now have to pay weekday charges when they spend Saturdays in the town.

The decision to increase prices comes as the council tried to tackle a projected £600,000 overspend on a £13.5 million annual budget.

► Man stabbed in eye

A MAN was stabbed in the eye with a pencil during a Christmas Day argument. Kent Police are appealing for witnesses to the altercation in Canterbury which saw the 38-year-old man hurt. The attack took place in the High Street some time between 12.45-1am on Christmas Day. PC Matthew Smith said: "Although the pencil punctured his eyelid it missed his eye and fortunately his sight has not been affected."

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Car park sex assault

A WOMAN was sexually assaulted in the car park of Sainsbury's in Canterbury on Wednesday. The victim, who is in her early 20s and from the Canterbury area, was walking home when she was attacked by a man just after 3am.

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

Honouring the great and good

A long-serving Conservative MP, a Bangladeshi restaurateur and an Armed Forces voluntary worker are among a number of Kent residents recognised in the New Year's honours list. **Chris Murphy** talks to some of those whose efforts have been rewarded with an honour from the Queen

ROGER GALE MP (KBE): Thanet North Tory MP Roger Gale has received a knighthood, but he admits the award belongs just as much to his wife, Suzy.



Sir Roger said: "I feel that this is, first and foremost, not a political, but a public service award. Suzy and I have been engaged in community work since long before I became an MP in 1983. I regard this as an enormous honour. It is, though, an honour that belongs to Suzy who has worked alongside and supported me throughout every day that I have been an MP."

DAVID ASHMAN (OBE): David Ashman gets his OBE for his voluntary service as national treasurer for SSAFA Forces Help.



The accountant from Sandwich said: "The work SSAFA does is amazing and really makes a difference to people's lives. It is a privilege to support the volunteers who do so much to assist serving and ex-service men, women and their families who are in need."

The military charity provides financial, practical and emotional assistance to current or past serving military personnel and their families.

DR ALAN JOHN COOPER (OBE): Dr Cooper is a higher technologist in the audio visual evidential analysis department of the Metropolitan Police, and was awarded an OBE for services to the police.

The Aylesford man said: "Forensic audio is an often complex science, but provides crucial evidence to a case and bring criminals to justice."

BAKHSHISH SINGH SODHI (MBE): The vice president of the management committee at the Gravesend Gurdwara Sikh temple, Mr Sodhi is now an MBE for his work on race relations.

The Gurdwara's secretary Narinderjit Singh Thandi said: "I am delighted Mr Sodhi's contribution to building good community relations in Gravesend over a period of some 35 years has been recognised with such a prestigious award."

LT COL ANTHONY DAVIS (OBE): An OBE goes to Lt Col Anthony Davies who is already an MBE. He was the chief executive of the Union Jack Club, and is current chairman of the Falklands Veteran Association.

He said: "The OBE is for my services to the Armed Forces. The Veteran Association does crucial work."

"We still do vital work helping those that are still suffering mental and other stress from their time fighting this war."

CHRISTOPHER HALL (OBE): Recently retired World Horse Welfare chairman, Christopher Hall, was recognised with an OBE.

He said: "I have been privileged in my time working with horses as I have visited so many interesting countries and met such a diverse range of people while doing what I love."

The solicitor from Tunbridge Wells joined World Horse Welfare in 2005 and became chairman the following year. He was instrumental in bringing about significant improvements to horse welfare both in the UK and internationally.

DR ANDREW KIDD (OBE): Dr Andrew Kidd, from Maidstone, is the deputy head of the Department for International Development's Kabul office. He was awarded an OBE, and is currently in Afghanistan.

SAMANTHA DARBY (OBE): Ms Darby, from Eynsford, is a policy adviser for domestic violence at the Home Office and was awarded an OBE.

GLENYS MCDONALD (MBE): Kent resident Glenys McDonald is the senior judges' clerks manager at the Royal Courts of Justice, at the Ministry of Justice. She said: "It was a surprise, but a great lift as my husband died in September."

Others awards include CBEs for Robert Assirati, from Tonbridge, former director of Major Projects Authority in the Cabinet Office; and Canterbury Professor James Mansell, a professor of learning disability at the University of Kent, Canterbury. An MBE goes to Prof Stephen Lambert-Humble, dental dean of postgraduate dentistry at the NHS Postgraduate Deanery for Kent, Surrey and Sussex. OBEs were given to David Cotterill from Sevenoaks, based with the Ministry of Defence; Roy Crouch, former Whitehall Streetscape Project manager with the Cabinet Office; and Gerald Williams, chairman of the Friends of Bedgebury Pinetum. MBEs go to Dartford council leader Jeremy Kite for services to local government; plus Susan Pamphlett, Inward Visits manager at the Overseas Office of the Department of Chamber and Committee Services, House of Commons; and finally Bajloor Rashid, an Ashford restaurateur and president of the Bangladeshi Caterers Association for his services to Bangladeshi catering.



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ENVIRONMENT

Green Belt housing development plans spark huge public backlash

By **Marijke Cox**

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A CONTROVERSIAL plan to allow housing development on Green Belt land has provoked huge opposition from the public.

Thousands of completed questionnaires, letters and online responses flooded in as part of a consultation into Gravesham Borough Council's Local Development Framework, which will form the basis of planning policy for the next 20 years in the area.

Part of the strategy involves building hundreds of homes on what is currently Green Belt land in areas including Meopham, Istead Rise and Culverstone.

Labour-run Gravesham council consulted on six growth scenarios ranging from 4,600 and 9,900 new homes, but finally recommended 4,600-5,200 in its plan. Between 320 and 920 of these could be built on the Green Belt.

The council said it envisages increasing the amount of Green Belt land across the borough, but residents have condemned the proposals.

In Istead Rise alone, a village on the outskirts of Gravesend, around 1,000 responses were received as part of the consultation – a third of the community's population.

Gravesham council's business director Kevin Burbidge was handed the responses by county



CHANGE? Up to 5,200 new homes could be built

and borough member, Cllr Bryan Sweetland, who lives in and represents Istead Rise, Cllr David Turner who also represents the ward, and former council leader Cllr Mike Snelling.

Mr Burbidge said: "The level of the response shows how engaged the public has been at this early stage in the process. It is heartening the publicity has generated such a response."

Since plans were unveiled last year, the strength of public feeling has grown, with residents voicing their fears about the proposals.

Cllr Sweetland met with minister of state for communities and local government, Greg Clark, who is also MP for Tunbridge Wells, to tell him

that Gravesham's Tory councillors were opposed to development on the Green Belt.

But Gravesham council defended the strategy, stating the authority had to find a robust plan to help it remain in control of planning issues.

The council said ministers had "moved the goalposts" and that economic conditions had "turned the whole pitch around".

Households in Gravesham will be able to comment on the final planning document before a decision is made by the Government at the end of this year.

Protect Kent, the county's branch of Campaign to Protect Rural England, condemned the council over the plans.

Chairman Richard Knox-Johnston said he was appalled at the proposals and called for a further round of consultation before the plan is finalised.

"The level of opposition has been unprecedented and shows the strong depth of feeling that local people have about the Green Belt," he said.

"Gravesham is a key part of Kent Thames Gateway, where it has been longstanding government policy to promote urban regeneration.

"We have supported that policy, and up to now Gravesham council has also supported it.

"It is clearly good and sensible planning to reuse derelict land rather than take our precious countryside, especially when it falls in the Green Belt."

■ **Opinion on p24 for more on the Green Belt.**

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Firefighters' plea to the school-run mums

FIREFIGHTERS are warning inconsiderate motorists to improve their parking outside school gates – or lives could be lost.

A number of roads are regularly turned into no-go zones for fire engines and other emergency vehicles because of cars left double-parked, at junctions, or too far from the kerb.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Mick Smith said: "In some cases crews have had to change routes because their usual journey has been blocked, but this could result in a tragedy if the delay means they are too late to save someone from the deadly effects of smoke and fire."

CRIME

Police manhunt for volunteer dog walkers

KENT Police are urging the public to get off the sofa and beat the Christmas bulge by becoming an unpaid police puppy walker.

Dog lovers are needed to help rear and develop German Shepherd and Belgian Malinois puppies aged from eight weeks to one year old.

Puppy walkers need to be at home most of the day and those allocated a dog would require a home check. Puppy walkers attend the Kent Police kennel with their pups once a month for training classes, which is also an opportunity to meet up with Kent Police handlers and to socialise with other puppy walkers.

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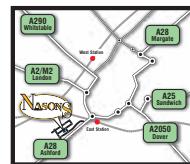
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HEALTH

Mum's breast implant nightmare as silicone leaks into her body

By Rob Colman

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A MOTHER-of-two has described her "absolute hell", after suffering pain following breast enlargement surgery using the controversial French PIP implants.

Before her op Catherine Kydd, 39, was reassured by her surgeon that the silicone implants would not rupture or liquefy, even in the event of, for example, a car accident.

She received PIP implants after she paid the company Transform £4,000 in August, 2004. She was shown how the silicone couldn't leak, with the gel sliced in half to demonstrate its solidity.

"It looked just like a fruit pastel, that was how they sold it to me" she recalled.

After an assessment in January, 2005, Mrs Kydd was told by the consultant at Transform that nothing was wrong and the procedure to increase her bust from A to C had gone well.

Within six months the beauty therapist, from Dartford, was suffering such pain that she could not lie down without a bra on. "It felt like the silicone was slipping around my back," she said.

Then in September, 2009, she discovered a lump on her left breast, and with a history of breast cancer in her family, she feared the worst.

"I can only described it as absolute hell," she recalled.

An ultrasound scan found the implant had ruptured and silicone had leaked into her lymph nodes under the arm-



IN PAIN: Catherine Kydd

pits, causing swelling and incredible discomfort.

Transform told Mrs Kydd she would have to pay £6,500 to have the implants re-augmented, after it said the guarantee was one month out of date.

But Mrs Kydd said: "My side of the argument was that the effects of this implant started well before this deadline, with the discomfort and swelling that had been going on in my body out of visibility."

"Then in 2010 they offered me a reduced surgery price of £2,400, but in the meantime the French Government had intervened and started looking to ban products used in these surgeries."

A year later, after many letters, she had persuaded Transform to perform surgery to replace her faulty implants, paid for by the clinic as a gesture of goodwill, but they still left the

silicone in her lymph nodes.

Mrs Kydd is still waiting to see a specialist over her fears about this.

She also started a Facebook page "to bring together all victims" of the PIP implants. The page contains postings from women in severe distress.

Mrs Kydd continued: "What many people don't realise is that once a CE mark is approved, they don't test again, so it leaves a gap and this is where in hindsight we are all used as guinea pigs, whether you have breast implants, a pacemaker or whatever. It's going to result in costing the NHS whatever happens."

Despite being one of the few lucky ones to have her implants replaced at no cost, Mrs Kydd remains anxious.

"I now have CUI allergen silicone implants in my body and have no idea what the long term effects are. I have constant pins and needles in my left arm, upper body rash, reoccurring pains down my left side. I have to live with this for the rest of my life," she said.

It is thought up to 40,000 British women have the PIP silicone implants, and the failure rate could be up to seven or eight per cent.

These also include thousands who underwent reconstructive surgery on the NHS.

PIP went into administration last year and its products are now banned, after it was discovered it had used non-medical-grade silicone believed to be made for mattresses, which had an increased likelihood of splitting.

SAFETY

Chimneys warning after spate of fires

HOUSEHOLDERS have been urged to make sure their chimneys are swept to prevent a build up of soot causing a fire. The warning follows 38 Kent Fire and Rescue Service call outs to chimney fires across the county from December 1-January 1. Crews attended 10 incidents in less than a week, with three fires occurring on the same day – Saturday, December 30 – at Stockbury, Gravesend and Faversham.

CRIME

Lucky escape for cat Fudge shot with airgun

A cat is "very lucky to be alive" after being shot. Fudge, an eight-year old Maine Coon cat, was found by his owner outside their home in Richborough Close, Orpington, on Wednesday, December 21, after being shot with an airgun. RSPCA Inspector Rachel Smith said: "Fudge is very lucky to be alive. The pellet went into his body but if it had hit his head or a vital organ he could have been killed."

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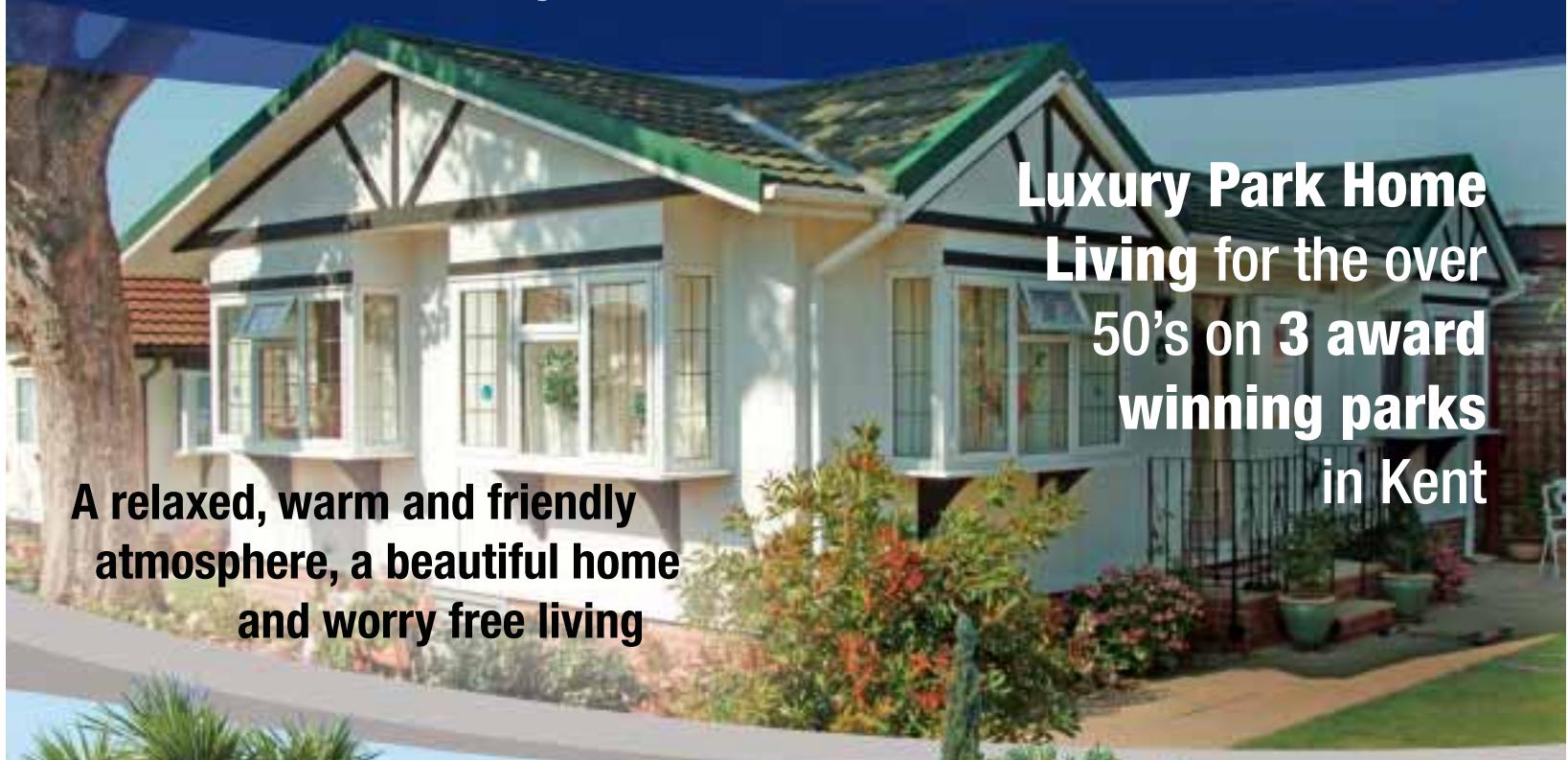
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WHAT YOU THINK

Maidstone residents tell us why they think the county town is such a great place to live and work.

■ Joan Morris, 59, a finance manager, said: "The town has easy access routes to the Channel Tunnel and London, it's got a very communal warming feel, with great shopping."

■ **Becky Patten, 25, an estate agent,**



said: "Maidstone has easy public travel services, like the buses and trains, and house prices are very reasonable for the area. It boasts a very vibrant nightlife and places to eat, it's also steeped with history and is within walking distance of the countryside."



■ Norman and Gemma Nesbitt, aged 37 and 30, said: "We moved here from Croydon and have never looked back, it's a lovely area with easy access to the seaside and countryside."

"When we were looking at house prices to move here, we found very good value properties were available. The town centre itself is very nicely laid out with more independent shops rather than main retail chain stores."

■ **Ray Eves, a retired power station worker, said: "It's quietly paced and located with almost everything on hand. Entertainment for all ages is available, with theatres and the nightlife and still holds three working men's clubs."**



■ Annette Playdell, 50, a civil servant, said: "I'm surprised by its rating, but it has a nice family feel to the place, as you can see there are no burger stalls here kicking out that revolting smell. The nightlife leaves a bit to be desired but the daytime shopping of nice branded shops is very pleasing."

■ **Mrs Hemmens, 48, a housewife of, Walderslade, said: "Maidstone has great surrounding village life, and seems to be a very desirable place to live. Its parks and historic feel all add to the atmosphere that embraces it as a borough of positivity."**

■ Mr and Mrs Barron of Bluebell Hill, said: "We'd rather come to Maidstone than go to Chatham, simply because of its lovely selection of shops, all in walkable distance. It's attractively laid out and has a feelgood factor about itself and so do the people. There is also very little begging/Big Issue sellers, which can be off-putting, as in some of the surrounding towns."

COMMUNITY

County town in top 10 of best places to live

By Rob Colman

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

MAIDSTONE has been named as the eighth best place to live in the UK.

The annual top-50 study carried out by the Halifax also included Tunbridge Wells at 12th, Ashford (27), Sevenoaks (38), Tonbridge and Malling (46), and Gravesend (49).

Maidstone Borough Council leader Cllr Chris Garland said: "We already knew our borough was a desirable place but it is great to have it confirmed by an independent survey.

"It will help to sell the county town as a great place for business. Economic prosperity is our number one priority and we scored particularly well for our employment rate, 84 per cent – the best in the UK.

"In 2012 our economy will be further boosted by the High Street regeneration project which could create up to 100 new jobs and bring more than



HOME: Maidstone town centre

£4 million of new spending to the town.

"Work will start on the Kent Institute of Medicine and Surgery at Bearsted Road, which could create up to 600 new

jobs, with an average salary of £40,000, when it opens in 2013."

Towns were ranked on a number of factors, including weekly average earnings; home size; number of vacant properties; broadband access; house prices; traffic flows; crime rates; health; exam results; and the weather.

Maidstone is home to around 7,000 businesses, and has a target to build 11,000 new homes over the next 20 years.

The council's cabinet member for economic development and transport, Cllr Malcolm Greer said: "This is good news and confirms what many residents will know already, Maidstone is a very desirable location to live.

"But the council will not be complacent and our top priorities for the borough will remain economic prosperity and quality of life."

■ **For all the latest news see www.yourmaidstone.co.uk.**

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Housing groups help residents take notice of their community

A RESIDENTS' association is feeling the benefit of teaming up with two housing associations after the unveiling of two community notice boards.

The Four Roads Residents' Association (4RRA) is made up of members who live in the Cunningham Road, Cunningham Close, Tedder Road and Montgomery Road areas of Tunbridge Wells.

It has been in place for more than four years and has raised money through a variety of fundraising efforts for community benefits.

Having teamed up with the Town and Country Housing Group and housing association Moat to put together a community plan, it is now reaping the fruits of the relationship.

Town and Country donated two notice boards and Moat installed them for free to provide



MAKING CHANGE: Unveiling one of the new notice boards at Cunningham Road

the residents' association a public face and provide an outlet to promote upcoming events and encourage involvement.

David Wood from 4RRA said: "We are working to build community spirit and involve more residents in helping us to improve where we live.

"The notice boards have been a fantastic addition, reminding residents of our work.

"Our successes from the last year are spurring us on to be more ambitious for our neigh-

bours and we are seeing a lot of support for community groups like us, that help themselves."

The teamwork has already seen a successful outcome – a grit bin has been installed at the end of Cunningham Road following major concerns about gritting issues during the cold weather.

The association runs a yearly jumble sale, summer fair and Christmas party – usually at St John's primary school on Cunningham Road.

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News

CRIME

Kent Police's 45 officers who have felt long arm of the law

By Rob Colman

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SOME 45 serving police officers and community support officers at Kent Police have been in trouble with the law, the second highest number at any force across the country.

The figures were released following a Freedom of Information (FoI) request. Across the UK 900 serving officers have criminal convictions.

One Kent Police officer was convicted of perverting the course of justice in 1998.

Kent Police Federation chairman Ian Pointon said: "I describe these figures as very judgmental. The difficulty with FoI requests is that it reads very black and white. I personally think these are very crude figures and the full information needs to be looked at rather than an overview.

"If you take offences such as speeding, do you really think an officer should lose his job for doing 35mph in a 30 speed limit area, where as an officer convicted of a domestic violence issue, he would be told he is not eligible for being an officer. So in hindsight if you take the speeders out of the equation, what are you left with?

"I don't know the full details of this information, but I can say Kent Police take a serious view of the criminal convictions that officers have, and uses the national standard recruitment vetting procedure as do the other forces involved."

The Home Office issued guidelines in 2003, saying that police officers should have "proven

integrity" because they are vulnerable to pressure from criminals to reveal information.

Kent Police have to save £50m due to a cut in Home Office funding, which is expected to lead to a loss of about 500 officers and 1,000 support staff.

Kent Police said that from 1993, 45 Kent Police officers who are still employed, have been arrested, charged or convicted of offences. All were disciplined by Kent Police.

Of these, 17 of these were for speeding, 11 for driving without due care, five for careless driving, five for drink driving, two for failing to stop, one for using a mobile phone while driving, and one for driving with expired insurance.

Of the three remaining officers, one was arrested for common assault and following court proceedings where they were given a conditional discharge, was reprimanded by the force.

The second officer was arrested for perverting the course of justice. This officer was bound over for two years by the court and reprimanded by the force. The officer had made a false entry in a notebook, and then corrected it to an accurate version of events.

The third officer was arrested for a public order offence, fined £100 by the court and fined by the force.

Assistant Chief Constable, Andy Adams, said: "Any offences committed by officers or staff are investigated in the same way as anyone else. We expect high standards from everyone representing the force and anyone falling short will be subject to scrutiny and dealt with by the courts where appropriate."

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News

READER OFFER

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NOW the Christmas and New Year celebrations are over, January can seem a rather dismal month, with not much to look forward to. But for fans of all things French, a great day out is just round the corner.

The France Show – Britain's largest French exhibition – takes place at London's Earl's Court from January 13-15 and will celebrate all that is best about France, from great food and wine to holidays for all tastes and budgets.

The Flavours of France Theatre will feature top French chefs demonstrating how to cook their signature dishes, while authors such as Stephen Clarke and Carol Drinkwater will read extracts from their best-selling novels.

Can-can dancers will be back to entertain with their high kicks and flamboyant costumes, and Nick Trend, travel editor at The Telegraph, will be giving his top travel tips.

London's oldest French restaurant, Mon Plaisir, will be back, with their own at-show

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brasserie, offering a special three-course lunch in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere.

The wine seminars are always popular and they won't disappoint this year, with wine-tastings and advice from experts such as Susy Atkins, the award-winning wine writer and broadcaster. Don't miss the champagne bar either.

If you're ready to plan your holidays, there will be plenty of travel operators and tourist boards to help you make the best choices for the family.

You could even book a language course to ensure you make the most of your trips to France.

For anyone whose New Year's resolution is to buy a property across the Channel, the French Property Exhibition is a great place to start, with

estate agents, property finders, solicitors, financial advisors and removals experts on hand.

The free seminars advising on everything from the legal side of buying to making a new life in France are very popular so make sure you get your tickets in plenty of time.

Meanwhile, the market will provide plenty to tempt – why not buy some bread, cheese, saucisson and patisserie to take home and make the French experience last a little longer?

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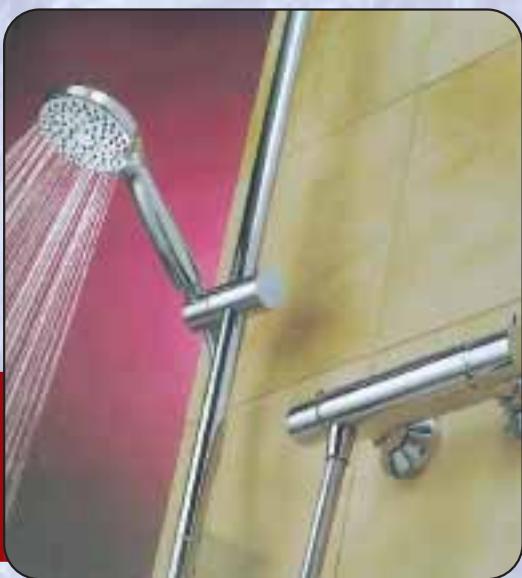
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CRIME

Fresh murder probe into '91 double killing

By Ed Hill

ed.hill@archant.co.uk

POLICE have renewed an appeal for information about two murders committed more than 20 years ago.

The Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate's cold case team is probing the death of Brenda Long, 42, who was discovered in her bath in Whitstable.

Police believe her killer drugged the woman to sleep before drowning her.

Nine months earlier, her partner Alan Leppard, 43, had been gunned down outside the couple's home in Monkton Street, Monkton.

No-one has ever been charged with the murders, and although police cannot say definitely the two crimes are connected, they have not ruled out a link.

Dave Stevens, from the cold case review team, said: "Although a fresh appeal for information is being made on the 20th anniversary of the death of Brenda Long, we can't speak of Brenda's murder without considering the murder of her partner Alan Leppard.

"On Easter Monday, April 1, 1991, Mr Leppard was shot in the chest with a 12 bore shotgun outside the couple's home.

"There was speculation at the time that this could have been a contract-style killing, but there is nothing to suggest that either Alan or Brenda had any involvement with criminality."

On December 28, 1991, Brenda Long was found at her Whitstable flat having last been seen alive by her sister on Christmas Day.

Mr Stevens said: "Following Mr Leppard's murder, Brenda Long moved to a flat in Cromwell Road. She was last seen alive by her sister on Christmas Day, 1991. Her sister spoke to her on the phone on Boxing Day and her body was found in the bath on December 28.

"Initially her death looked like suicide, but a post mortem examination established she had diethyl ether in her bloodstream and marks around her face and mouth, which suggested that she had been put to sleep and then drowned.

"Twenty years on we are still no closer to establishing a motive for either murder."

At the time of Mr Leppard's murder, witnesses reported seeing a white large Cadillac-style American car in Monkton.

Three weeks before the murder, two men were seen in the nearby White Stag pub asking about Mr Leppard. Police released e-fits of the men at the time and the murder was featured on TV's Crimewatch, the reconstruction prompting 950 calls from members of the public.

As part of the cold case review the team has spoken to Nick Biddiss, a retired detective superintendent with Kent Police, who was the senior investigating officer for both murders.

Mr Biddiss said: "In the nine months after Alan's death I regularly updated Brenda on the enquiry. She was affable and there wasn't an evil bone in her body. We had no reason to believe either she or Alan were involved in any criminality whatsoever – they were just tragic victims."

Heading the cold case investigation into both murders is Det Insp Ian Rogerson from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate.

He said: "The advances in technology around DNA mean we can review opportunities that were not available to detectives 20 years ago."

Anyone with information about either murder can call 01634 884044 or Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

■ For all the very latest news and sport headlines go to www.yourcanterbury.co.uk.

SPORT

MP wants action on claims made against Fifa president Sepp Blatter

TORY MP for Folkestone and Hythe Damian Collins has renewed his calls for an independent investigation into Fifa president Sepp Blatter's conduct following fresh bribery allegations.

Former Fifa senior vice-president Jack Warner claims Blatter awarded him World Cup television rights

for \$1 in return for helping Blatter win Fifa presidency elections.

Mr Collins, who sits on the culture, media and sport select committee, recently formed a global grouping of politicians to push for reform within the football body.

He made a fresh appeal for an investigation into Blatter's conduct.

RELIGION

Society letting down young people, claims Archbishop of Canterbury

ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams has argued that Britain must embrace its young people to avoid a repeat of the riots which marred 2011.

He said society had "let down so many young people" and we need to change our approach to prevent them feeling further isolation.

Dr Williams said: "We have to ask, what kind of society is it that lets down so many of its young people?

"That doesn't provide enough good role models and drives youngsters further into unhappiness and anxiety by only showing them suspicion and negativity?"

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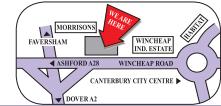


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KOS CAMPAIGN

Winter fuel campaign raises £10,000 for elderly

By Marijke Cox

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ISOLATED elderly people in a Kent coastal town have been thrown a lifeline by the Archant KOS Media-backed Surviving Winter appeal.

Herne Bay Age UK was given £2,650 made up of generous donations from some of the county's pensioners, who donated their winter fuel payment to those in need.

The funds will support the charity's Two's Company Service, which helps prevent loneliness and isolation through a home visiting service.

Around £1,000 of the cash will go

into an emergency pot to help support eight people in the area with problems such as broken heaters.

Chief executive officer of Herne Bay Age UK, Sue Cliff, said she was extremely grateful for the generosity of Kent's pensioners.

"Thank you very much to all those people who donated their winter fuel payment," she said. "Other people really do need it. We've had people volunteer in the past to give their payment after realising themselves they don't need it. The Surviving Winter appeal has highlighted this."

The campaign, run by Kent Community Foundation (KCF), invites well-off

households to donate some or all of their £200 winter fuel payment to poorer elderly or vulnerable people.

The payment is given tax-free by the Government to every house with a person aged 60 or over.

So far, the appeal has raised almost £10,000 since November.

It looks to help reduce fuel poverty – when a household spends more than 10 per cent of its income on gas or electricity bills – which has become a growing problem with some 39,000 pensioners suffering across Kent and Medway.

Herne Bay Age UK's chief Ms Cliff said schemes such as the Two's Com-

request it in order to alleviate loneliness and isolation," she said.

"Elderly people may be concerned about keeping the heating on because of the cost of bills and so instead they stay in a room, wrapped up, which can cause loneliness."

"We have volunteers, but some of the funding from the Surviving Winter appeal will pay for our paid staff."

"It will mean being able to access more individuals. It keeps them in touch with what's going on and we can help them access any further support or information they might need."

Donations can be made at www.kentcf.org.uk/surviving_winter.html.



ALONE: The cash helps the vulnerable

pany Service helps those struggling with fuel poverty to avoid isolation while also helping them access help.

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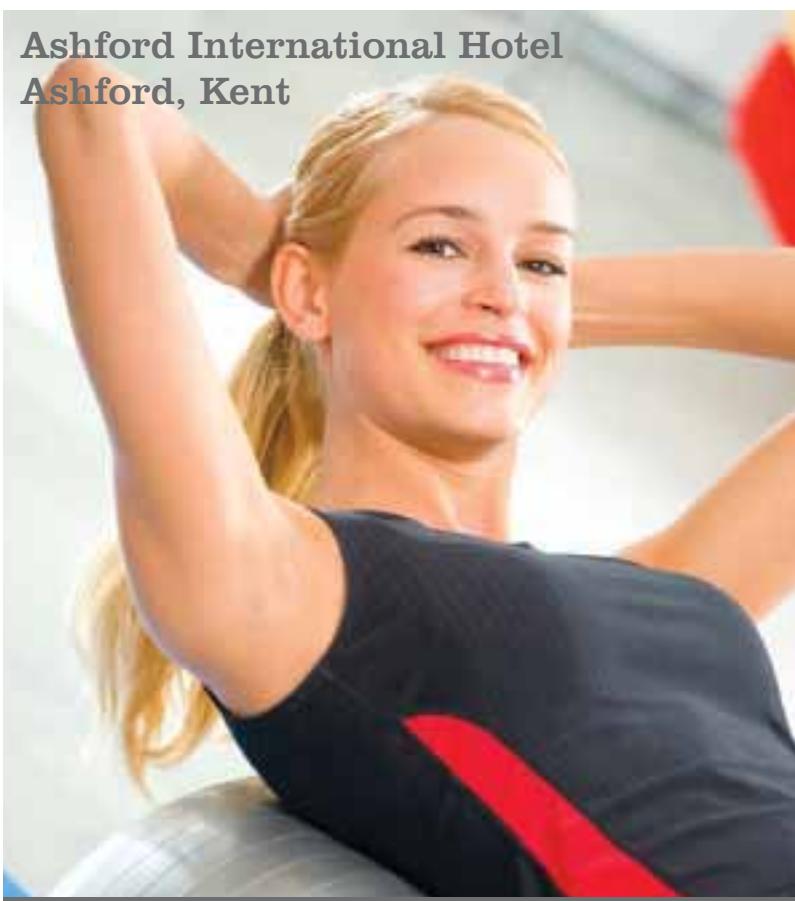
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DRY DOCK: HMS Gannet, now at Chatham, was designed specifically to fight the notorious slave trade

Why part of anti-slavery ship is on Obama's desk

By Nick Ames

nick.ames@archant.co.uk

AMONG the many proud achievements in its history, the Royal Navy can point to its key role in ending the notorious trans-Atlantic slave trade.

It is estimated that between the 16th and 19th centuries around 12 million Africans were forcibly seized and crammed into sailing vessels taking them to a life of misery, working in mines and on plantations.

Around two million are believed to have died during the crossing and their bodies thrown overboard in a business referred to by Africans as the "maafa" - Swahili for "great disaster".

In 1807, Britain voted to outlaw the trade and it largely died out by the 1860s.

During that time British warships seized around 1,600 vessels and freed approximately 150,000 Africans. But the trade continued in many other parts of the world and so did the struggle against it.

The Mediterranean and the Red Sea were key areas with Arab slavers preying on East Africans and among the ships policing it was the 1,130-tonne sloop HMS Gannet, equipped with two seven-inch guns, four 64lb guns, and four machine guns.

Built and launched at Sheerness Royal Dockyard, HMS Gannet is currently open to the public at Chatham Historic Dockyard, following a £3 million restoration.

Visitors to the ship can take part in a dramatic audio tour which gives them a sense of what it was like to take part in



TOP SEAT: President Obama sitting behind the Resolute Desk

a dangerous anti-slavery mission in 1887.

It takes them back to the dangerous waters of the Red Sea, which runs from the tip of the Sinai Peninsula past the coasts of present-day Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Eritrea and out into the Indian Ocean.

After a Royal Navy officer is fatally wounded in a skirmish the sloop is sent to capture those involved, with tour including details of the encounter as well as a look at what life was like for the sailors on board.

HMS Gannet was specifically designed for trade protection and surveying work, as well as anti-slavery operations.

The ship cost just over £50,000 to construct and was officially designated as a Doterel-class screw sloop when launched off the coast of Sheerness on August 31, 1878.

It also was in action in 1888, engaging anti Anglo-Egyptian forces in Sudan where Osman Digna, a general famous for his

impressive beard, was besieging the port of Suakin in the name of fundamentalist Islam.

After the battle HMS Gannet was transferred to harbour duties at Chatham before being leased to the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company, where it was moored off the Isle of Grain and used to accommodate workers.

A spell as a training ship followed and the cricketer and philanthropist CB Fry - who was once offered the throne of Albania - used it as a dormitory for disadvantaged boys training for a career in the Royal Navy.

The school only closed in 1968 and HMS Gannet's fate was uncertain until restoration work started. Ownership passed from the Maritime Trust to the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust where it now forms part of the National Historic Fleet.

And in 2009, the ship's role in anti-slavery operations was impressively recognised when Prime Minister Gordon Brown made his first visit to President Barack Obama in the White House and presented him with a wooden pen holder made from its timbers. The gift accompanied an earlier piece of presidential history.

One of Gannet's sister ships, HMS Resolute, provided the wood for a desk presented by Queen Victoria to President Rutherford B Hayes in 1880.

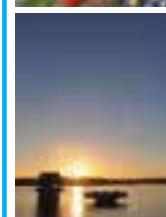
Many presidents since Hayes used the 'Resolute Desk' at various locations in the White House, but it was Jackie Kennedy who first brought the desk into the Oval Office in 1961 for President John F Kennedy.

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Green Belt must be saved

Immigration and not a lack of development sites is at root of housing shortage, believes South East MEP and Ukip leader Nigel Farage

THE purpose of Green Belt in planning policy is to protect natural environments, improve air quality and protect the unique character of rural communities which could otherwise become an extension of an existing suburb.

They also provide the opportunity for those living in urban or suburban areas to have access to the countryside and all the benefits that come with it.

The prospect of a life without areas for children to play in, summer picnics, and areas for sports, is a dire one indeed.

This is why, when I was contacted by a Kent organisation called Save Green Sites which is attempting to persuade the local council not to allocate Green Belt land and green field sites identified within the borough for potential future development, I was keen to assist it with its aims.

Sadly, Gravesham Borough

Council's future planning strategy proposes to earmark land for nearly 1,000 homes on land protected by Green Belt. This is despite many brownfield sites being available for the required building of houses. Consequently 15 areas in villages have been identified for building projects. These are 15 areas which should not be touched by developers and their diggers.

Only a few weeks ago I wrote about the disastrous planning proposals of the Coalition government, headed by Greg Clark MP who, as you may recall, has a view from his home that is protected by law.

The Coalition's plans were to slash the number of planning regulations from thousands of pages to just 52.

Since then a group of MPs has slammed the policy, claiming it lacks clarity and puts more emphasis on economic growth than environment and

society: the things which Green Belt was designed to protect.

Of course, we cannot look at planning laws without looking for the reason behind this apparent need to build so many new houses.

One doesn't need to look far beyond net migration into this country and the huge waiting lists faced by local councils to house residents to see that there are problems. But these problems are not there just because of a lack of available housing: the MPs' report came as new findings from mortgage lenders Halifax showed the number of empty homes in England has jumped to 662,105.

Altering planning laws and digging up parks and fields will just be papering over the cracks of the problems we face.

The next stage of the process is the council's cabinet meeting in March where the target figure of dwellings to be built over



the next 20 years is expected to be agreed.

The campaigners are joined by the Campaign to Protect Rural England who say that residents at Higham, Istead Rise, Meopham and Culverstone are angry that the council is looking to promote development in the Green Belt.

I urge those people who wish to protect Kent's green belt land to contact their representatives on Gravesham Borough Council and let them know the land is protected for a reason.

The Green Belt issue does not just apply to Gravesham but is a concern shared nationwide. But just as charity starts at home, we can all make a difference if we remind those making the decisions that they are elected to represent our views and need to listen to them accordingly.

■ **Nigel Farage lives in Westerham.**

KOS COMMENT

Farce of drug-driving laws must be tackled

THE current system of dealing with drug-driving is almost laughable.

It's illegal to take drugs, yes. But

if you are caught driving under the influence of drugs, the police have to prove you are impaired to prosecute.

Common sense seems to have got lost along the way somewhere.

In the case of Lillian Groves, her family had to watch the man who killed their daughter – and who been smoking cannabis beforehand – get away with a short sentence because the police couldn't prove impairment.

What kind of message does this send out – that it's safe to take drugs and drive as long as you feel relatively normal? This needs to change before more lives are lost.

Well done to you all

CONGRATULATIONS to all those who received New Year's Honours. It's good to see Kent is home to so many talented, driven and commendable people.

And what a mix it was; from politicians to a restaurateur, to professors to an equine expert. Aside from the storms, it's been a good start to 2012.

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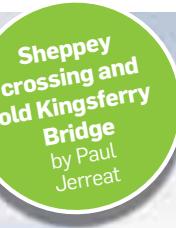
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'Mugged' by KCC pay-offs

I HAVE just been made redundant from a private company after 25 years, and have just received the absolute maximum payout under the government scheme, which equates to £12,000.

Some might say that is not too bad, but how does this compare with the £400,000 expected pay-off by Kent County Council for Katherine Kerswell for less than 18 months' work?

Normal government redundancy payment requires a qualifying period of at least two years. Her predecessor who was also on a generous wage, received a similar spectacular pay-off.

It would seem that many hard-pressed ratepayers of Kent are being 'mugged', not by physical violence, but by 'secret' very lucrative deals done with our money, by councillors who are supposed

to be working for us.

These are not isolated cases as there have been quite a few generous pay awards and pay-offs on this council gravy train in recent times.

Terry Hudson, Herne Bay Distraction for all our senses

I'M writing this letter to all producers of TV programmes, films and documentaries.

I would like to know why we have to strain our senses to hear the dialogue above the so-called background noise they call music.

I was most surprised that it was the same when trying to listen to David Attenborough's Frozen Planet.

Will somebody please put a stop to this obnoxious procedure. I wonder what would happen if we all switched on a radio when meeting and talking in the street?

Documentaries, etc, made in the 60s were a pleasure to

listen to and watch now – I'm afraid I turn most modern day ones off!

I will be interested in your readers' comments on this.

John R O'Neon, Folkestone

Kite's flying in face of Games

I DON'T often feel the need to write to the Press but, after hearing the views of Dartford Borough Council leader Jeremy Kite on the Olympics at a recent council meeting, I felt compelled to speak out.

I asked Cllr Kite why he hadn't bothered to ensure that Dartford was included in the route for the Olympic torch.

His attitude concerned me. He complained about the cost of the security measures involved – even though that's not a factor for most neighbouring councils. Dartfordians, he said, will just have to travel elsewhere if they want to witness this historic event.

Cllr Kite made a curious

speech which left the strong impression that he resented the fact the UK was hosting the Olympics at all.

That negative stance was further confirmed after his deputy, Cllr Martin, complained to the BBC about traffic "gridlock" arising from the games. The Highways Agency, however, doesn't agree.

It's disappointing that Dartford's council leadership have failed to appreciate the significance of the torch procession. Dartford needs regeneration and bringing the torch to the town would help raise the town's profile.

Apart from the economic benefits to the UK, the vast majority of people are proud that this historic event will make our country centre stage next summer. But not so, it seems, for Cllr Kite and his supporters who have proven themselves to be thoroughly out of touch and Scrooge-like over this issue.

Geoff Prout, Shadow Leader of Dartford Borough Council

Green policies stifle growth

STEVE Dawe's response to my previous opinion on the shale gas/fracking debate was rather predictable. A rehash of all the usual scares that I had in fact addressed and the arrogant dismissal of a differing viewpoint as "in error".

He does, however, lay bare the real 'Green' agenda by stating that energy policy is primarily about conservation, efficiency and massively reduced demand and usage – rather than new forms of power generation.

I could not disagree more. That may be Green policy, but I doubt many others would concur.

Of course, I don't blame Steve, or anybody else, for sticking behind their beliefs – for that is what green ideology really is, it claims scientific basis, but boils down to a belief.

I also won't knock any

reasonable effort to cut unnecessary wastage – nothing wrong with a bit of good housekeeping.

But I draw the line at the enforced lifestyle changes, reduced living standards and potential economic crippling of our country that full-scale adoption of their policies would bring about.

If this country is to undergo recovery and regain some sort of place in the world with an increased population and some revived manufacturing industry with the required infrastructure, putting our fuel and energy on 'short rations' is out of the question – we are going to use more, not less – possibly quite a lot more.

In a free society supply should be demand led – subject to availability. A 'green society' will not be a free society.

Without repeating myself, I would answer Steve that while some of his alternative energy sources just might improve enough to be of use eventually, in the immediate future they offer only not enough for too high a cost.

Shale gas represents a new form of an existing technology; it is plentiful, cheap, local and offers (with very low risk) a 'home-grown' supply of fuel for some time to come.

For the medium to longer term, for power generation, there is an improved form of nuclear generation – using thorium instead of uranium and plutonium. This proven technology produces far less radioactive waste than present methods, and is more difficult to produce bombs from – which is why it was not favoured when initially investigated back in the 40s.

If, in order to survive economically, we also have to burn some coal and oil for a bit longer, then so be it.

Which vision would you prefer? The green one: reduced and intermittent power with lower living standards, and consumption (not to mention travel opportunities) planned and controlled like something out of old Eastern Europe? Or the one I here propose: use of our own natural resources to bring about economic recovery – in five years we could be self-sufficient in energy again.

If we follow the American example fuel prices will come down (gas in the US already has, they have stopped importing and started exporting).

Ian Taylor, Dover

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Address: Apple Barn, Smeeth, Kent TN25 6SS
Editorial:
Telephone 01303 817100;
Fax 01303 817002;
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Inheritance is nothing to declare for debtor

A FRIEND was declared bankrupt in September, 2009, and after one year he was discharged from bankruptcy with no restrictions. He is now to inherit from his father who died recently. Does he have to declare this inheritance to the Official Receiver, and is it likely that the receiver would have any interest in the money?

IF YOUR friend was discharged from bankruptcy without any restrictions that could be applied to his future finances, and with no claim from the Official Receiver, then the money he now inherits will be his with no strings attached. The fact that your friend's father died a year or more after the discharge from bankruptcy works in his favour. If the father had died before your friend was discharged, the Official Receiver could have made a claim.

OUR daughter has been living with her partner for the past four years and they have a one-year-old son. Her partner is divorced and says he has no wish to marry again, and our daughter has accepted this. However, we are concerned as to what would happen if he should die. They are living in a house which he owns and it is in his sole name. He says that if he does die, she will automatically get everything, including the house, but he has not made a will. Is this true, or would his ex-wife have a claim? He has told us that when they were divorced, they made a 'clean break' settlement, and there were no children.

YOUR daughter is in a very risky situation – though not for the reasons you think. If her partner did negotiate a clean break with his former wife, this should mean that she has no further claim against him, probably because he paid her an agreed lump sum at the time. It would be sensible for your daughter to double-check the divorce agreement with a solicitor, though, just in case her partner has not understood the clean break correctly. However, your daughter's biggest problem is not her partner's ex-wife. It is her own son. If her partner dies without leaving a will, then the first in line to inherit everything, including the house, is not her – it is the one-year-old child. When someone dies without a will, the intestacy laws set down a pecking order that decides who gets what. If the person who dies is unmarried, but has children, everything they leave must go into trust for the children until they reach the age of 18. If the house is being bought with a mortgage, could your daughter afford to take over the payments, assuming the

TONY HETHERINGTON
MONEY CLINIC

mortgage lender allowed this? And even if she did, there would still be a messy division of the property's value when her son reaches 18. If he demanded his share at once, your daughter could be forced to sell her home. Your daughter could try to sidestep all this by going to court as soon as her partner died. She could apply for a court order granting her a share of his estate. But this can be expensive and there is no guarantee of success. Every case is judged on its merits. The real solution is for her partner to make a will now. There is nothing to stop him leaving as much as he likes to his son, but at least your daughter would know where she stands.

IHAVE some National Savings index-linked certificates that mature soon. I asked at the Post Office, but apparently there are no index-linked certificates on sale at present. Is there anywhere else you would suggest I reinvest that will keep the inflation-proofing? The sum involved is about £4,000.

ALTHOUGH there are no new certificates on sale, you can still reinvest existing index-linked National Savings certificates and keep your money safe from inflation. Shortly before your certificates mature, you should be invited to switch into a special scheme for existing customers. You can leave your money invested and it will still grow in line with changes in the retail prices index. You will also get 0.5pc interest on top. All this is tax-free, just like your existing certificates. There are other index-linked schemes, but as they are not tax-free, your money will not really match inflation. Some profits will go to the taxman. An exception to this is the Inflation Linked 10 account from Yorkshire Building Society (0845 1200 100). This neatly combines index-linking with a tax-free Isa to get the best of both worlds. The minimum investment is £3,000 and the only possible snag is that this is a six-year scheme. Early withdrawal fees apply if you quit sooner.

■ If you have a personal-finance question, write to Tony Hetherington, MyMoney24, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE. We regret that neither Tony nor the MyMoney24 team can enter into personal correspondence.

Mortgage approvals rise as remortgage figures fall

THE number of approvals for new house purchases has risen to its highest point in nearly two years, but the picture is less bright in the remortgage market.

Bank of England figures show there were 52,854 approvals for home purchases in November, worth a total of £7.6 billion. It was the second consecutive monthly rise and the highest figure since December, 2009.

But the number of loans for remortgaging fell for the second month in a row, with 31,154 loans worth £4.1bn. That was the lowest number since last June.

"The material drop in the number of remortgages may reflect how, as the eurozone crisis escalated and the economy deteriorated in the late autumn, people became even more confident that interest rates are going nowhere for quite some time," said David Braithwaite, director of Citrus Financial Management.

"The fall in remortgage activity may also reflect declining equity levels in



KEY TO THE FUTURE:
2012 could be another hard year for those people wishing to get on the property ladder

the UK's housing stock as house prices continue to slide downwards."

He added: "Looking forward, 2012 will be about matching willing borrowers with reluctant lenders. At best, we'll be moving sideways.

"The problem is that borrowers are hesitant to borrow and lenders aren't overly keen to lend.

"People buy property when they're

confident, and confidence is disappearing at roughly the same rate as Christmas cheer.

"Credit conditions are likely to get tougher, too. The banks are ultra-wary about each other's exposure to sovereign debt and this growing wariness could rapidly translate into reduced mortgage availability and higher rates."

More people turning to easy credit to pay basic housing costs

By Adam Aiken

Editor MyMoney24

MORE than a million people across the south east of England are using expensive credit to meet their basic mortgage and rent repayments, in a stark illustration of the financial strain being felt by many households.

The findings by homelessness charity Shelter suggest that many people are in dire financial straits at the start of a year in which most forecasters agree the economic outlook will worsen.

The charity said more than 1.1 million people in the region used payday loans, unauthorised overdrafts, personal loans or credit cards to pay their basic housing costs last year, and it warned that 2012 could see an increase in people losing their homes.

Using expensive credit to pay the mortgage or rent is a warning sign that someone's finances are on the brink. It is an unsustainable situation

and signifies deep financial problems.

Payday loans, in particular, can lead to serious problems if they are used for this purpose. These loans – some of which charge interest of up to 4,000 per cent – are designed to tide someone over with a small amount for a few days, and should not be used to meet long-term fixed commitments such as housing costs.

"These shocking findings show the extent to which thousands of households across the south east of England are desperately struggling to keep their homes," said Campbell Robb, chief executive of Shelter.

"Turning to short-term payday loans to help pay for the cost of housing is totally unsustainable.

"It can quickly lead to debts snowballing out of control and can lead to eviction or repossession and ultimately homelessness."

He added: "Every two minutes, someone in Britain faces the nightmare of losing their home.

"We urge every single one of these

people now relying on credit to help pay their rent or mortgage to urgently seek advice."

Nationally, the figures are startling. The Shelter research suggests that nearly seven million people used credit to pay their mortgages and rent last year, with nearly a million of them using payday loans for this purpose at least once.

People who find themselves in such a situation should seek help from a charity such as Shelter or Citizens Advice immediately.

R3, the trade body for the insolvency industry, recently published research that suggested 3.5 million people were likely to take out payday loans over the next six months in a bid to help make ends meet.

"Having a financial buffer is crucial to weathering periods of difficulty," said an R3 spokesman.

"If struggling to payday becomes a regular occurrence, seeking financial advice should be a priority over short-term, high-interest credit."

Improved tax relief good news for investment in businesses

By Nick Ames

nick.ames@archant.co.uk

THE announcement of a further improvement in the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS), which encourages investment in businesses, is good news for companies looking to expand, according to one industry analyst.

Phil Beavan, of High Growth Kent, which promotes business initiatives, said it could help to function expansion plans and so boost the county's economy.

EIS is a scheme that uses a series of tax reliefs to encourage individuals to invest money in small businesses.

In April, the Government increased the amount of relief available to 30 per cent while also increasing the amount that can be invested under the scheme.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the news that a further improvement would now see the first £100,000 of investment receive 50 per cent relief.

Mr Beavan said: "EIS is very widely acknowledged as being one of the best schemes around for encouraging investment in smaller businesses. It has been around since 1994 and there is a very good reason for that.

"By increasing the tax relief to 50 per cent, it means that somebody investing, say, £35,000 in a qualifying business would immediately re-



EXPANSION PLANS: Many firms could benefit from the Enterprise scheme

ceive £15,000 in tax relief, and as EIS is a series of reliefs the maximum they could lose if the business fell over would now be less than £11,000.

"Couple that with the tax-free nature of gains under EIS and it is a very attractive proposition.

"At present, individuals can invest up to

£1 million per year and receive 30 per cent relief, but in my experience most investors are not looking to place anything like that amount.

"The reality is that this is a very, very high-risk game and any money that investors offer they have to be able to lose."

Beavan said the news could mean more cash coming the way of companies wanting to expand via the Investors Network, which backs business.

He said: "Kent Investors Network is the region's best-kept secret. It is a group of high-net-worth people that we work closely with and are based here in Kent.

"They are passionate about Kent business and, perhaps more importantly, have up to £6 million to invest in the right opportunities.

"They were ready to invest under the old scheme, so they will be more than ready to invest now that the scheme is even more attractive."

Declan Treanor, from Kent Investor Network, said: "We are still digesting the Chancellor's statement, but on the face of it we think it's positive in terms of how we are trying to help local businesses.

"Certainly, we are encouraging businesses to look to High Growth Kent in the first instance to help them establish if they are ready to speak seriously to us, and we want to get a message out to the region's businesses that we are here, we are looking for opportunities and we are in a position to provide finance."

GROWTH

Companies hit by skills shortage and red tape

A REPORT by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) says firms with more than 50 employees have ambitions to grow but are held back by a lack of skilled workers and burdensome regulation.

The BCC's latest Workforce Survey shows that 52 per cent of firms want to take on more employees before 2015, with only 8 per cent looking to reduce staff numbers.

With unemployment expected to peak at 2.77 million in 2012, business is expected to play its part in creating growth and jobs.

The research says, however, that ambitions held by larger firms to expand and grow their workforce are frustrated by a lack of skilled labour in the UK and red tape.

Jo James, chief executive of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, said: "This report matches very closely to the feedback I get from companies in Kent."

"There is a willingness and desire for expansion and job-creation which is frustrated by many aspects, especially red-tape regulations and a lack of skilled people seeking employment."

"The need for private-sector expansion to restore economic growth is paramount, and measures to facilitate that expansion are essential."

INITIATIVE

Bank's managers invest their time to understand what client needs

MEDWAY window and conservatory company Supaglazing benefited from two extra members of staff for the day when Barclays business manager Steve Edge, and Simon Nicholson, regional business director, worked at the company as part of a 'back to business' initiative.

Supaglazing is a family business established in 1981 and installs windows, doors and conservatories. The company, based in Strood, also has showrooms in Dartford and Sittingbourne.

Michael Booth, senior accounts manager, said: "We transferred our business account to Barclays after we were unhappy with our previous bank and I've been really impressed with Steve Edge, our business manager.

"He knows his stuff and is really on the ball. If I need to

get hold of him he always makes himself available.

"It is great Steve and his manager were willing to spend the day working with us. It was a good opportunity to discuss some ideas I have been toying with for the company."

Mr Edge said: "It was a great experience spending the day with Michael and his team. This is an excellent, diverse business with ambitious plans and I am now in a better position to understand what the company needs to be able to succeed in this industry."

Mr Nicholson said: "The back-to-business initiative will see all 1,700 of our business managers spending the day working alongside our clients.

"Learning more about our customers enables us to provide the right levels of support and advice when required."

TRANSPORT

Coach service a capital idea for commuters

A NEW commuter service is to be launched linking west Kent with London.

Air-conditioned coaches run by Centaur Commute will soon be linking the area with a number of points in the capital.

Matthew Sims, managing director of Centaur Coaches & Minicoaches, which is running the service, said: "We've spent a lot of time listening to customers and finding out everything that is wrong with the London railways commute from the Tunbridge Wells area and have set to work to fix it."

"For example, we examined costs and are able to offer big savings to commuters of up to £1,000 a year and more."

"Unlike the trains, we have also incorporated many pick-up and drop-off points at key locations, which in many cases will mean passengers will not need to get on buses or Tubes upon arrival in the capital to reach their workplace."

The new route has also been designed to pass two free car parks close to Tonbridge before joining the A21.

Centaur's service officially takes to the road on Monday, January 30, but the company has announced a number of trial services throughout the month.

MEETINGS



Centre is now open for all your business meeting needs

BUSINESSES can now get access to a meeting space in Maidstone and at the same time do their bit to support the work of an important community facility.

The Maidstone Community Support Centre (MCSC) in Marsham Street can accommodate either small meetings or large gatherings of up to 150 people.

The facilities include eight meeting rooms, which are available on an hourly basis, seven days a week for meetings, training, away-days, seminars and conferences.

Each room comes complete with AV equipment, WiFi, laptop, multimedia projector, DVD, VCR and TV whiteboard and flip-charts, ensuring the all-in price is reasonable.

Photocopying, faxing, laminating up to A3 and brochure collation can also be supplied at an additional charge.

The Victorian building was adapted in 1988 to provide affordable office and meeting space for charitable and community groups, and it is also proving increasingly popular with companies from Maidstone and the surrounding area.

The centre is accessible to wheelchair-users with additional facilities and dedicated parking by prior arrangement.



FAR-REACHING: Kent Science Park is to head the British side of part two of the Channel Innovation Network's collaboration scheme

Science park leading the way in cross-Channel cooperation

By Nick Ames

nick.ames@archant.co.uk

KENT Science Park in Sittingbourne is to lead the county in a multi-million-euro cross-Channel trade project that aims to bring English and French firms closer together.

The park will head Kent's UK side of the Channel Innovation Network's second phase (CHAIN 2), a project designed to enhance the collaborative work between companies in southern England and those in the regions of Normandy and Brittany.

This €2 million scheme builds on the previous CHAIN project and brings together 11 partners from Normandy, Brittany and southern England – including start-up business centres, science parks and innovation hubs.

CHAIN is one of only a small group of public/private-sector partnerships to

have successfully secured European Interreg funding.

Kent Science Park's first goal will be to expand the CHAIN database of Kent companies that are keen to do business with French organisations and may have been supported by business centres, technology clusters and science parks.

Most of these firms will work in the biotech and life-science industries, information and communication, marine industries, logistics and transport, materials engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors.

During the three-year project, which begins on April 1, 2012, Kent Science Park will also take a leading role in encouraging French companies to move to the English side of the Channel, increase trade, employment and training opportunities and improve communication links.

Richard Wheeler, head of business de-

velopment and regional liaison at Kent Science Park, said: "We are thrilled to be leading the Kent side of the CHAIN 2 project.

"This scheme will bring the county's private and public sectors together to promote Kent, something that is crucial in these tough economic times. I am sure that through working with Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council and our CHAIN 2 partners we will be able to deliver growth and jobs across the county."

Alex King, deputy leader and international portfolio holder at Kent County Council, said: "We are delighted to take part in the CHAIN 2 project, which will benefit businesses across Kent and northern France.

"By increasing trade links and providing training and exhibition opportunities, CHAIN 2 can not only safeguard jobs in the region but create many more."

AWARD

Basepoint recognised for its space

THE Basepoint-operated business centre in Chatham, The Joiner's Shop, has won the prestigious Workspace Of The Year award for 2011 at the Business Centre Association (BCA) Awards.

Established some 10 years ago, the annual BCA Awards, this year held at London's Park Lane Hotel, include four categories: Business Centre Of The Year, Workspace Of The Year, Office Broker Of The Year and Trade Supplier Of The Year.

Nominations are sent to the judging panel for discussion and members decide on a winner and two runners-up. The award is given to a business centre that has added value to its clients' business, rather than simply providing clean, well-managed work space.

Basepoint Chatham opened in March 2009 and focuses on the needs of small and start-up businesses specialising in the creative industries.

The centre is home to 44 thriving creative businesses, ranging from graphic designers to specialist printers and engravers.

John Luchford, centre manager at The Joiner's Shop, collected the award. He said: "As a newly-appointed centre manager, I was content with being short-listed along with two other Basepoint centres, Swindon and Newhaven.

"When the Chatham centre was announced as the winner, it was quite a shock and a huge honour. Winning is testament to all the effort we have put in to ensure that our licensees thrive within a positive environment.

"I believe in the opportunities and support Basepoint offers to SMEs and this award is something I will share with all of my colleagues as recognition of all of our hard work and determination."

Pay nothing once you've set up your own water supply

THE need in business to cut costs, together with concerns about the long-term reliability of mains water, is prompting an increasing number of companies to instal their own supplies.

Vossbrook Private Water Supplies has seen a steady rise in enquiries in recent months as companies look to secure the continuous water supply on which their businesses depend.

Founded by Deal-based Kingsdown Water, which sells more than five million bottles of natural mineral water a year throughout the UK, Vossbrook's aim is to make its experience and expertise in sourcing and drilling for water available to other businesses.

Up to 20,000 litres of water can be abstracted daily for free, without a licence or planning permission, providing big savings for heavy users.

Vossbrook senior partner William Bomer said: "A business using seven million litres a year – less than 20,000 a day – will be paying annual water rates of approximately £7,000, so an initial investment of around £14,000 pays for itself in two years and thereafter the water is free."

Vossbrook provides a complete source to tap service, from surveying the site to drilling the borehole and

installing the pipes, pump work and filtration equipment. By using a solar panel to power the pump, the whole process becomes carbon-neutral.

Bomer said: "This spring was the driest for over a century, with many regions facing drought conditions, so having an independent water supply not only makes economic sense, it also provides peace of mind.

"We have seen a surge in

interest from a broad spectrum of businesses – agricultural, golf clubs, private schools, the leisure industry and manufacturers whose production processes require high volumes of water.

The number of enquiries from domestic users is also increasing. For the owners of properties with a swimming pool or extensive gardens and grounds, having their own secure water supply means



PARTNER: William Bomer

they no longer have to worry about hosepipe bans and other restrictions on mains water."

GForces expansion helps push the boundaries of opportunity

By Nick Ames

nick.ames@archant.co.uk

AUTOMOTIVE digital-agency systems firm GForces, of Bearsted, has opened the doors on its expanded new office building.

It is designed to allow the web-management company to maintain its status as a fast-growing hi-tech employer, as well as facilitating an increase in the intake of Kent pupils and college students into its training academy.

Since the beginning of 2011, GForces has grown by a further 25 per cent, now employing 150 staff members. With the expansion of the building at the Caring Lane site, there is now space for up to 50 extra employees, while the training academy intake will now double in number compared with 2011.

The established Caring Lane office space borrowed the names of pilots who flew over Kent in the Second World War, and the new meeting rooms' names continue the military theme.

These names include Churchill, Dowding (after Hugh Dowding of Fighter Command), Stirling (after Sir Archibald Stirling, founder of the SAS), Gibson (after Guy Gibson of Bomber Command and the Dambusters) and Montgomery (after Field Marshall Montgomery).

Opening the building was a distinguished guest of honour who flew operationally during the Second World War.

Flight Lieutenant Rodney Scrase DFC flew Spitfires as part of 72 Squadron from 1941 in Sicily and North Africa, for which he received his



HONOUR: Distinguished guest Flight Lieutenant Rodney Scrase cuts the tape to herald the GForces expansion, having attended the original office opening in 2008

Distinguished Flying Cross. He finished the war as part of 1 Squadron, flying bomber escort missions out of RAF Manston.

He is president of the 72 Squadron Association and maintains a close relationship with the GForces team, having been one of the guests to

open the original office back in 2008.

GForces managing director Giles Smith said: "We are delighted the extension to our headquarters is now finished and ready to use.

"This new premises allows us to take on more new starters and continue to grow our business with

minimal impact on the environment.

"We want to attract the brightest and the best, so the new jobs will come with competitive salaries well above the county average.

"We are honoured to have such a distinguished guest opening our new extension. Our business strives to

push the boundaries, to succeed and to provide opportunity to the current and next generation.

"Pilots such as Rodney risked their lives for the same reasons during World War Two. It is the least we could do to open this extension in their honour."

High hopes for small firms thanks to loan scheme

THE Federation of Small Businesses says it welcomes a proposal to provide up to £40 billion of bank-loan guarantees through a National Loan Guarantee Scheme.

who requested a loan were turned down, and 21 per cent of those who did get a loan had to pay interest rates of 10 per cent or higher.

"In line with the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Banking report, the National Loan Guarantee Scheme should be run in a way that encourages competition outside the major players who currently dominate the market.

"It should also increase access to the smallest companies, specifically improving the supply and price of credit for those at the lower end of the market... for example, below loan values of £25,000, where the majority of demand lies and where firms have had particular problems raising finance.

However, it says the Government should follow the principles set out by the FSB that explain how this can be used to particularly target small businesses that are the backbone of the Kent economy.

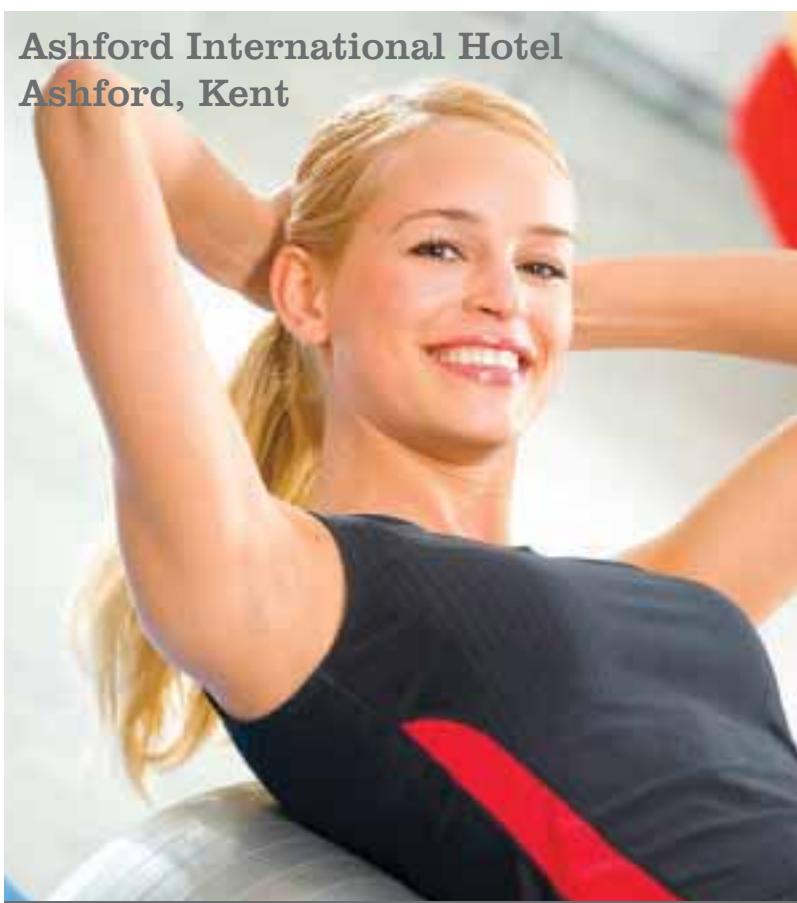
Figures show 90 per cent of FSB members turn over £1 million or less, while the average amount borrowed by FSB members over 12 months is about £25,000.

Roger House, FSB chairman for Kent and Medway, said: "According to the most recent FSB Voice of Small Business Index, 33 per cent of those



READY CASH: It is hoped small businesses in particular will benefit from the National Loan Guarantee Scheme

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College success with 2-for-1 offer

WHEN Erith engineering firm WT Henley Ltd needed to take on a trainee engineer it went North West Kent College in Gravesend.

And the chief engineer was so impressed by the students he interviewed, the company has taken on two apprentices rather than just the one it originally planned.

Chief engineer Owen Williams said: "Apparently 'we have a shortage of skilled engineers in the UK'. I find that as a kick in the teeth to college lecturers and students who work very hard to ensure this is not the case."

The successful students, Sam Toulson, 18, and Samantha Clark, 19, start at the company in the New Year for three days a week while continuing their studies with North West Kent College on the Extended Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

Next year they will return to start the HNC in electrical and electronic engineering.

"This speaks volumes for the work we do here at North West Kent College as well as demonstrating that good ties are being forged with reputable employers", said curriculum supervisor Stephen Crockford.

Welder training centre to open

AN independent inspection and testing business in Kent is set to open a new welder training centre as part of its expansion plans.

Sittingbourne-based Spree Engineering was founded by director Chris Spree in 1978, and provides weld testing services and non-destructive testing of buildings, structures and pipelines for companies in the power generation, petro-chemical and construction industries.

Its customers include the National Grid and the engineering firm Laing O'Rourke.

The opening of the welder training school early in the New Year will create two new jobs and will add to the company's current ability to test welders who want to become registered.

Spree Engineering director Chris Spree said: "While we've been involved with welder testing for many years, the new school will enable us to train welders for the first time which will be a valuable addition to our business and the construction industry."

THE UK's first-ever National Skills Academy for Construction has closed its doors after four years, with organisers saying it leaves a "proud and lasting legacy in its wake".

It was established on Denne Construction's Stanhope estate regeneration project in Ashford in 2007, and has contributed to the local economy and the lives of local people by providing apprenticeships and training opportunities for school leavers, long-term unemployed, and community members.

The project was centred around the £65 million residential regeneration scheme at Stanhope, which included the development of more than 400 new homes, as well as the refurbishment of 330 existing council-owned properties.

CITB - Construction Skills worked with Denne Construction to develop a dedicated Employment and Skills Plan for the scheme, to ensure the skills needs of the project and local area were met, while ensuring local apprentices, businesses and schools benefitted.

The National Skills Academy for Construction model which was used for the project enables training at all levels to be delivered on a local basis, around major construction projects, rather than being delivered off-site in a pre-established training course.

Gary Hewison, performance co-ordinator for National Skills Academy for Construction in the South, said: "The National

Skills Academy for Construction here in Ashford has focused on delivering the right skills required by contractors direct to their project, as and when they need it, as well as providing training for people in the local community.

"This has been a huge success and has set the bar for others to follow.

"I am pleased to say all our targets have been fulfilled and as part of the legacy of the project local people, who are looking for training and career opportunities, will now be directed to an advice service for those seeking work or training in the construction industry."

Denne business improvement manager Nicholas Fowler said: "We are extremely happy with how successful this project has been, with so many local people having benefited. We developed and maintained a great relationship with local colleges and schools, which lead to an extremely successful work experience programme, of which we are very proud.

"We are committed to rolling out this approach to other projects across the country."

The project has:

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UCA architecture students team up to win top design competition

A TEAM of students from the University for the Creative Arts at Canterbury has won the American Institute of Architects UK Student Charrette 2011.

The one-day design competition, attended by many leading schools of architecture in the UK, was contended by 10 teams in London.

Oliver Froome-Lewis, BA (Hons) Architecture course leader at UCA Canterbury, said: "This is a significant win showcasing the contemporary qual-

ties of our students' approaches, their commitment and their highly productive and collaborative working methods."

The competition required students to work in teams of six to eight, representing their school or institution.

The winning team from UCA consisted of Harry Varnavas, Frazer Day, Sam Edwards, Andrew Woolford, Sarah Hussain, Yvonne Jackson, Pharsisi Kanchanamai and Lucy Smith.

This year's theme challenged

students to 'explore how architectural form can create both expressive and rich interior spaces which heighten one's understanding of an overall concept or idea'.

Harry Varnavas said: "We came up with a dynamic design which at the same time gave the idea of a 'living building'. This provided the viewer with the experience of living within a movable space. Ramps were positioned and the shapes of the new exhibition spaces were created."

Students' success at letting their fingers do the talking

STUDENTS in Ramsgate can now communicate with deaf people in sign language.

The youngsters at the Chatham and Clarendon Grammar Federation have gained Level 1 passes in British Sign Language following a 32-week course of intensive after-school studies.

The project run in conjunction with the Royal School for Deaf Children, Westgate College for Deaf People, and The John Townshend Trust, has been so successful a new group of students is now learning BSL, which is a recognised language.

The certificates were presented at a ceremony by Gail Joslin, BSL tutor, and Jon Palmer, BSL co-ordinator and tutor.

Sixth former Abi Attwell plans to study clinical engineering at university. She said: "I want to work with disabled people and learning BSL is an important way for me to communicate with those who are deaf."

Maddy Kinloch in Year 10 is studying Level 2 in BSL, and said: "I want to improve my signing skills because my best friend's sister is deaf and I want to be able to talk with her in her language."



CERTIFICATE: Pupils at Chatham and Clarendon Grammar Federation celebrate their exam passes

Mrs Joslin said: "I am impressed with the way that the school embraced learning BSL as a trial and then wholeheartedly for Level 1 certificates, which are equivalent to a GCSE C grade pass.

"Learning BSL is a fantastic asset for people in their lives, not least in a raft of professions like medicine and teaching. It is also expressive and I have seen how students have developed self-esteem through the learning programme."

Mr Palmer added, through sign language: "BSL Level 1 means these students can now hold a basic level of communication with a deaf person. They have shown a high level of dedication to progress so well in a short space of time. As a deaf person it is important when hearing that people bother to learn and communicate with us through signing."

Would-be interior designers get the chance to learn bedroom style

If you fancy yourself as the next Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen or Linda Barker then MidKent College's new short evening courses in interior design might be just the ticket.

Starting in January, the first 10-week course is aimed at beginners who will study towards a City and Guilds in interior design (bedroom and bathroom).

Those who successfully complete the course have the option to progress to a further 10-week course geared towards

the design of lounges and office space.

MidKent College lecturer Ellie Bentley said: "The courses will be fun and very 'hands-on'.

"They are for anyone interested in interior design, whether you're a budding professional designer or someone who just wants some creative ideas for your bedroom."

Call 01622 624905 or email elaine.bentley@midkent.ac.uk for more information.



STYLISH: TV's Linda Barker



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We offer initial and on-going training to our volunteers. It is **FREE** with out of pocket expenses reimbursed. For giving just a few hours a week, you will get so much back!

The next course starts Tuesday 21st February 2012 and runs during school hours for 10 sessions (every Tuesday and Thursday).

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To apply send your CV to recruitment@pagesuite.com. For more information visit <http://pagesu.it/januaryjobs> and select your role.



The Spencer Wing is an independently owned and managed private hospital. We have a 4 bed unit at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford and a 22 bed unit situated on the QEPM Hospital site.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff:

Physiotherapy Manager

Full time

To manage our Physiotherapy Department and maintain clinical skills with our in-patient and out-patient activity, primarily at Margate but across both sites.

Six or more years post graduate experience and previous management experience preferred.

Closing date for applications 20th January 2012

To discuss these opportunities or to arrange an informal visit, please contact

Lynn Orrin, Hospital Manager - 01843 234554

For job description and application form please contact:

Jo Edwards, East Kent Medical Services Ltd, The Spencer Wing, QEPM Hospital, Ramsgate Road, Margate, Kent CT9 4BG
Telephone: 01843 234556 Fax: 01843 296333
E-mail: jo.edwards@thespencerwing.com

The Spencer Wing is an equal opportunity employer

This position is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure check

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Happy New Year?

Not for everyone, for some the days will be gloomy and without hope.

SAMARITANS will be the only ones they can talk to 24/7 for a voice to lighten their darkest hours. If you would like to help, just a few hours a week can change lives - including your own.

Call Gill or Barry on 01303 239179 for further information



REGISTERED NURSES RGN AND CARE ASSISTANTS

Come and join our friendly team here at Applecroft - a modern nursing home, purpose built to accommodate the needs of older people and set in a pleasant location in the village of River, Dover. Applications welcomed from Registered Nurses and Care Assistants who either have experience in caring for older people (experience or qualification in Dementia Care an advantage) or wish to gain experience in this field.

To arrange an informal visit and application please contact: Brendan O'Connor, Clinical Manager. Tel 01304 821331



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Be part of an exciting and growing team working for the largest community media company in the UK with all its associated benefits

Digital & Business Development Manager

Archant KOS Media is looking to recruit an experienced commercial person who has a strong background of business development preferably in the online arena.

This person will be used to putting together Powerpoint presentations to key accounts and must be able to work with the minimum of supervision.

On occasions the successful applicant will go out on joint presentations with other sales account managers to present bespoke solutions for their clients through our various online services.

This is a key position and will report directly to the Ad Director and work very closely with the Field Sales Manager for Kent.

This person will need to build and develop relationships across all of Kent and will support the commercial management team in its long term goals.

You will also be required to work on occasions from our Ashford based offices but it is envisaged that in the main, it will be working in the field.

The position offers an excellent salary package and generous bonus scheme with company car, as well as ongoing training and career development plus 5 weeks annual leave, contributory pension scheme and life assurance.

A full driving licence is essential.

Account Manager Field Based (x2)

Archant KOS Media are looking to recruit highly driven, confident, self motivated team players to work on our portfolio of products which consist of newspapers, magazines and digital platforms, you will need to be able to work under pressure to deadlines and targets.

Working with an existing client base where customer service is paramount, you must also be able to search out new business to develop and grow your territory revenues and opportunities. You will be building long lasting relationships with organisations throughout Kent.

Ideally you will be from a sales or marketing background and have the drive, tenacity and determination to succeed. Basic knowledge of computer systems is required.

We offer a company car, excellent basic salary plus a generous bonus scheme, ongoing training and career development, five weeks annual leave, contributory pension and life assurance scheme and all the benefits of working for a large media organisation. A full driving licence is essential.

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Please apply in writing with your CV and covering letter in the first instance to:

Ynez Coton

Advertising Director, Archant KOS Media
Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SS
or email ynez.coton@archant.co.uk

ARCHANT } KOS MEDIA

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

Including family announcements in partnership with the Kent registration service

To register Births, Marriages and Deaths contact the Kent registration service on 0845 824 7400

For advertising announcement enquiries telephone Kent on Sunday 01303 817150

BIRTHS

FRENCH

Oliver James French, %0d%0aborn 12th December 2011 to David and Ruth. A brother for Ben.

GILLESPIE

Louis Myles born on 13th November 2011, weighing 9lb. Son to Susan and Lee Gillespie and brother to Joshua in Maidstone.

HORNCastle

Sienna Maria born on 4th December 2011 weighing 7lb 0oz. Daughter to Philip Horncastle and Natalie Harcos.

ISAACS

Michael and Lindsey are proud to announce the birth of Jake Isaacs. A baby brother to Alex Isaacs.

JENKINS

Victoria and Wayne are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful baby son Roman Andreas Jenkins born on 9th December 2011 weighing 6lb 13oz.

TESTER

Kian Oliver Wayne Tester born on the 10th December 2011 at 6.05pm, weighing 7lb 2oz. To proud parents Julia and Liam.

KENT

James Christopher Kent born on the 10th December 2011, weighing 9lb 3oz. Brother to Tom and son to Chris and Kate of Charing.

MAULAYAH

Shweta and Devin Maulayah celebrate the birth of their daughter Arianna on 5th December 2011.

SHERRIN

Nikki and Paul celebrate the birth of their Daughter Amelia Hope on 4th December 2011 weighing 6lb 14oz.

STEVENS

Ava Pearl born on the 5th December 2011 at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Pembury, weighing 9lb 8oz. Daughter to proud parents Suvi and Michael Stevens, of Maidstone.

STONER

Gabriela and Michael Stoner of Broadstairs celebrate the birth of their daughter Lily Rose Stoner on 3rd December 2011.

WHITE

Gill White died peacefully at home on 26th December 2011. Loving mother of Alexandra and Danielle. Fondly missed by all who loved her.

TUTT

Michelle and Andrew Tutt are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful boy Rory Adam Ronald Tutt, born at home on the 16th December 2011 at 2.55am weighing 10lbs. Welcome little brother to Eilidh.

WILSON

Lisa and Thomas celebrate the birth of their son Oliver Thomas Wilson, on 16th December 2011

DEATHS

BLACKBURN

In Loving Memory of Mary Rose Blackburn who peacefully passed away in the arms of those who loved her on Friday 16th December 2011

PENNY

Bryan John Penny died peacefully at home on the 19th December 2011.

Funeral Service at Tonbridge Parish Church at 2pm on Monday 9th January 2012.

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PLANNING

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION
FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**
**NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF THE
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE)
(ENGLAND) ORDER 2010**

**KCC/DA/0537/2011 - Proposed development at
Wilmington Academy, Common Lane, Wilmington,
Dartford, Kent, DA2 7DR.**

Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support is applying to the Kent County Council Planning Applications Group for planning permission for redevelopment of existing school site to include: Demolition of some of the existing buildings, retention of the existing horticulture vocational unit, arts block, sixth form/SEN block and science block and erection of a two-storey academy building and sports centre. Retention of existing hard surfaced games courts and sports playing fields and creation of new hard and soft play/recreation areas. Provision of 92 on site car parking spaces, 6 motorcycle parking spaces, 1 mini bus parking space, 4 bus/coach pick up/drop off spaces and 146 cycle spaces. Creation of a hard surfaced one-way access road. Retention of existing vehicular exit on to Common Lane and creation of a new vehicular entrance from Common Lane to the West. Provision of associated hard and soft landscaping. The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated. The proposed development affects a public right of way.

You may view this application at Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent, DA1 4TR.

**KCC/TW/0523/2011 - Proposed development at
Sandhurst Wastewater Treatment Works, Crouch
Lane, Sandhurst, Kent, TN18 5PA.**

Southern Water Ltd. is applying to Kent County Council for planning permission for additional processes upgrading Sandhurst Wastewater Treatment Works facilities including two walk-in kiosks and upflow nutrient reduction Sand Filters.

You may view this application at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 8 Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 2AB.

Alternatively, details of all applications can be viewed on Kent County Council's website at www.kent.gov.uk/viewapplications or at our offices in Maidstone at the address below during all reasonable office hours.

We accept comments online via our website, by email to planning.applications@kent.gov.uk or in writing to Planning Applications Group, Kent County Council, First Floor, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX within 21 days from the date of this notice. Please quote the application reference number and note that comments may be drawn to the attention of Council Members, the applicant and other interested persons and may include publishing on the Borough Council website.

Sharon Thompson
Head of Planning
Applications Group
Kent County Council
Dated: 8th January 2012



Planning applications

Notice under Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995
Notice under Section 67 and/or Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Notice under Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
Notice under Regulation 5A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the council:

CA/11/01815/FUL: 46 Whitstable Road, Canterbury, CT2 8DJ Single-storey extension and alteration of fenestration to rear and replacement windows to front of dwelling. Applicant: Mr Gibb Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/01890/FUL: 25 School Lane, Herne, CT6 7AL Erection of porch to side elevation of dwelling. Applicant: Mr and Mrs Gabriel Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/01980/FUL: Land at Middle Pett Farm, Pett Bottom Road, Bisham Bourne Erection of polytunnels. Applicant: F W Mansfield & Son Reason: Major development.
CA/11/02000/FUL: Telford House, Telford Street, Herne Bay, CT6 5LX First floor extension to dwelling. Applicant: Mr Pinchin Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02018/FUL: Land at Rhodaus Town, Canterbury Erection of student accommodation comprising 448 bedrooms. Applicant: Peugeot Motor Company plc/Petros Canterbury Ltd Reason: Major and conservation area.
CA/11/02040/FUL: 34 Island Wall, Whitstable, CT5 1EP Demolition of two-storey rear extension and erection of replacement two-storey extension with dormer window and accommodation in roofspace. Applicant: Mrs Nearn Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02063/FUL: 22 St Dunstans Street, Canterbury Installation of ATM. Applicant: Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02069/FUL: Former Tannery Buildings, Stour Street, Canterbury, CT1 2PL Application for a new planning permission to replace planning permission CA/08/1416/FUL for conversion and extension of former tannery buildings, including rebuilding of part of building 5 to provide 44 bedroom hotel with bar and bistro, in order to extend the time limit for implementation. Applicant: Hotel Du Vin Limited Reason: Major and conservation area.
CA/11/02079/LB: Unit 1, 4-6 Orange Street, Canterbury Change of use from retail (Use Class A1) to restaurant/cafe (Use Class A3) and associated alterations. Applicant: Praedia Investments Ltd Reason: Work to a listed building.
CA/11/02080/FUL: Unit 1, 4-6 Orange Street, Canterbury Change of use from retail (Use Class A1) to restaurant/cafe (Use Class A3). Applicant: Praedia Investments Ltd Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02085/FUL: Highstead Riding Centre, Highstead, Chislet, CT3 4LX Erection of six dwellings and associated parking and landscaping. Applicant: Mr Todd Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02102/FUL: Greenways, Beech Hill, Bridge, CT4 5AU Demolition of existing garage and erection of a two-storey side extension to dwelling. Applicant: A Creighton Reason: Conservation area.
CA/11/02119/FUL: 44 Regent Street, Whitstable, CT5 1JF Replacement windows and doors. Applicant: Mrs J Lancefield Reason: Conservation area.

Any representations should be sent in writing to the Head of Planning and Regeneration, Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury CT1 1YW or e-mailed to development.control@canterbury.gov.uk to arrive on or before **Monday 30 January 2012**.

The weekly list of applications can be viewed on our website at: www.canterbury.gov.uk/dc

Ian Brown, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Friday 6 January 2012

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Rochester, Kent

By Informal Tender

The Stirling Centre is one of Medway Council's public sports and leisure centres situated on Maidstone Road close to the M2 and M20 motorway links. The building has a GIA of approximately 1750 m² (18,800 sq.ft) and is situated within a site of approximately 1.69 ha (4.18 acres).
www.medway.gov.uk/thestirlingcentre

Offers are invited for an initial development agreement to enable refurbishment of the facility for continuing sporting and complimentary uses. Upon completion a long lease will be granted to maintain and enhance use as a public and private leisure facility.

*Offers invited by informal tender
Closing date: 12noon, Friday, 3 February 2012*

For a full information pack contact: property@medway.gov.uk or 01634 332050



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PLANNING

Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications
11/03762/HOUSE Stream Farm Iden Green Road, Benenden
 - Tiled roof extension with glazed link (LB)

11/03767/LBC Stream Farm Iden Green Road, Benenden
 - Listed building consent - tiled roof extension with glazed link (LB)

11/03768/HOUSE The Manse Standen Street, Benenden
 - Two storey rear extension with window to south east side, conservatory and bay window extension to south east elevation and replacement single garage with log store (LB)

11/03733/HOUSE Monktons Windmill Hill, Brenchley

- First floor side and rear extension with windows on north and west elevations (CA)

11/03772/HOUSE 2 Brattles Grange Cottages Tibbs Court Lane, Brenchley

- Two storey and single storey side extension with windows to front, side and rear elevations (LB)

11/03743/HOUSE Thorndene High Street, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

- Ground floor rear extension and related alterations to dwelling (CA)

11/03722/FUL Land At The Junction Of Post Office Road And Northgate Road, Hawkhurst

- Construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings (CA)

11/03729/FUL J K Security Ltd Grove Mills, Hawkhurst

- Change of use from office to residential (LB) (CA)

11/03732/FUL Stiles Oast Maidstone Road, Horsmonden

- Change of use of agricultural land to ancillary residential curtilage (retrospective) (LB)

11/03734/LBC Drum & Monkey House Grovehurst Lane, Horsmonden

- Listed Building Consent: Replacement of five windows to front of house with new oak windows to match existing old windows (LB)

11/03709/FUL Freelancers Ltd The Meeting House, Pantiles & St Marks

- Removal of condition 6 of TW/08/03177 restricting hours of use for air conditioning units (TW/10/03873/FUL refers), variation of condition 4 - material details of garage door (CA) (LB)

11/03751/LBC Fairlawn House 22 Mount Sion, Pantiles & St Marks

- Listed Building Consent - Provision of stair handrails to main entrance door (LB)

11/03736/HOUSE Amber Court Holden Road, Southborough Town Council

- Freestanding garage and associated landscaping (CA) (LB)

11/03788/HOUSE 65 The Boundary Langton Green, Speldhurst

- Conversion of part garage to living accommodation with new window to front (west) elevation and rooflight to rear (east) elevation (LB)

(DEPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LA) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
 Head of Planning Services
 Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS
 Dated: 07 January 2012



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ARCHANT KOS MEDIA

THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL Town and Country Planning Act Notice of Applications

MA/11/1841/S - LOCKMEADOW CENTRE, BARKER ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME16 8SF - Alterations to entrances, including new stairs, terracing and lift to Barker Road, and new rear terrace. **Reason: 6**

MA/11/2039/N - THE HAYLOFT, OLD SHELVE, ASHFORD ROAD, LENHAM, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 2DT - Demolition of existing disused milking parlour and construction of a new bungalow for use ancillary to the use of 'The Hayloft'. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2110/N - TRAVIS PERKINS TRADING CO LTD, COBTREE HOUSE, FORSTAL ROAD, AYLESFORD, KENT, ME20 7AG - Outline application for the erection of a building for B1, B2, B8 and or vehicular showroom use with access to be considered at this time and all other matters reserved for future consideration. **Reason: 6**

MA/11/2111/N - TRAVIS PERKINS TRADING CO LTD, COBTREE HOUSE, FORSTAL ROAD, AYLESFORD, KENT, ME20 7AG - Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide a new builders merchant trade counter (B1, B2, B8) units along with vehicular storage, access, service road and parking. **Reason: 6**

MA/11/2116/N - LAND ADJACENT TO BARTY HOUSE NURSING HOME, ROUNDWELL, BEARSTED, KENT, ME14 4HN - Erection of a detached house. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2122/S - HILL PLACE, LINTON HILL, LINTON, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 4AL - An application for listed building consent for installation of conservation rooflight to south elevation and internal alterations to bathroom. **Reason: 3**

MA/11/2124/S - REDVERS HOUSE, CHART ROAD, SUTTON VALENCE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 3AW - Erection of detached double garage. **Reason: 7**

MA/11/2126/S - 4, HAYLE MILL COTTAGES, HAYLE MILL ROAD, TOVIL, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 6DT - Erection of single storey rear extension, and introduction of dormer and first floor window to rear elevation. **Reason: 2**

MA/11/2136/S - SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL, NORTH STREET, SUTTON VALENCE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 3HT - Reconstruction of ragstone retaining wall. **Reason: 1, 2**

MA/11/2137/S - SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL, NORTH STREET, SUTTON VALENCE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME17 3HT - Listed building consent for reconstruction of ragstone retaining wall. **Reason: 3**

MA/11/2140/N - KENT WILDLIFE TRUST, TYLAND BARN, CHATHAM ROAD, SANDLING, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 3BD - Temporary siting of two storage containers (for a 5 year period) 6m long by 2.5m wide and 2.5m high. Replacement of boundary fence and field gate. **Reason: 1**

MA/11/2145/S - THE FINCHES, CHARTWAY STREET, EAST SUTTON, KENT - Change of use of land for the storage of 10 caravans. **Reason: 1**

Reasons for advertisement key:

- 1 - Applications affect the setting of a Listed Building.
- 2 - Application affects the setting of a Conservation Area.
- 3 - Application is for Listed Building Consent.
- 4 - Application is Major Development.
- 5 - Application affects a Public Right of Way.

Copies of applications listed may be seen at Maidstone Gateway, Maidstone during office hours (Monday to Wednesday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Thursday 8.30am to 7pm, Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm). Any representations should be made in writing to me by no later than **22nd January 2012**, quoting the application number.

Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ. Dated: 8th January 2012



Canterbury City Council

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Canterbury City Council will be held at The Guildhall, Westgate, Canterbury at 7pm on Thursday 12 January 2012.

Colin Carmichael
 Chief Executive
 Canterbury City Council
 Military Road
 Canterbury CT1 1YW



PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY & VILLAGE GREENS

PROW - VILLAGE GREENS - IN THE DISTRICT OF CANTERBURY

NOTICE OF PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY

COMMONS ACT 2006 - SECTION 15(1)

APPLICATION TO REGISTER LAND KNOWN AS GRASMERE PASTURES AT WHITSTABLE AS A TOWN OR VILLAGE GREEN

Notice is hereby given that the Public Inquiry into the above matter, which commenced on Monday 5th September 2011, has been adjourned and will resume on:

Monday 30th January 2012 at 10.00am

at Whitstable Castle, Tower Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 2BW

A copy of the Inspector's Directions (dated 24th May 2011), as well as the further Directions of the Inspector (dated 21st October 2011), setting out the procedure to be followed for the submission of evidence and the format that the Public Inquiry will take is available on the County Council's website at www.kent.gov.uk/villagegreens.

For further enquiries, please contact Miss Melanie Neir on 01622 221628.

Countryside Access Service
 Kent County Council
 Invicta House
 County Hall
 Maidstone
 Kent
 ME14 1XX

Dated: 8th January 2012

This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.

For further information, please contact
 Kent Countryside Access Service,
 on 0845 345 0220 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm)
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Benefits include:

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Closing date: 18 January 2012

Interview Date: 24 January 2012

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'. Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

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Teacher for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties to commence Easter 2012

MPS + SEN + TLR 2C £2,535
 (TLR with previous experience)

The school is located in pleasant surroundings and we have educational resources of enviable proportions. This post would suit newly qualified teachers or those wishing to gain further experience of SEN. Comprehensive induction and training will be provided. Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 20th January 2012

For further details and a job description, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.

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GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

R. S. SKIPS LTD of 25 Darnley Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0RZ is applying to change an existing licence as follows: to add an Operating Centre to keep 10 vehicles and 2 trailers at Unit 4 APex Business Park, Queens Farm Road, Shorne, Kent, DA12 3HU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.

A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

HIGHWAYS - District of Canterbury

(CHURCH LANE, WHITSTABLE)
(30 MPH SPEED LIMIT)
ORDER 2011

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

The Kent County Council, acting as the local traffic authority and in exercise of their powers under sections 82, 83, 84 (1) and (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (hereinafter called the Act), and of all other enabling powers, after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Part III of Schedule 9 to the said Act of 1984, hereby makes the following Order:

1. No person shall drive any motor vehicle at a speed exceeding 30 miles per hour on the lengths of road specified in the Schedule to this Order.
2. The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of this Order as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

SCHEDULE

(30 mph Speed Limit)

1. Church Lane, Whitstable from its junction with the A2990 Thanet Way to its junction with Seasalter Lane and Faversham Road in a generally north-westerly direction.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at the Offices of Canterbury City Council, Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent and at Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing to The Traffic Schemes and Member Highway Fund Manager, Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to TRO@kent.gov.uk by 12 noon on Monday 30th January 2012.

MILL LANE, BRIDGE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to provide a new electricity supply, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Mill Lane, Bridge, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 2 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of the junction with Western Avenue.

The alternative route is via Union Road, Saxon Road and Western Avenue.

STODMARSH ROAD, CANTERBURY (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of repairs to a collapsed sewer, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Stodmarsh Road, Canterbury, on or after 9 January 2012 for an estimated period of up to 3 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of 'Robins'

There will be no access for through traffic between the junctions with Littlebourne Road and Moat Lane.

The alternative route is via A257 Littlebourne Road, St Martin's Hill, Longport, Lower Chantry Lane, St George's Place, A28 Lower Bridge Street, Broad Street, Military Road, Tourel Road, Sturry Road, Mill Road, Water Lane, Fordwich Road, King Street, High Street and Moat Lane.

Any vehicles over 6' 6" wide should use A257
Littlebourne Road, Canterbury Road, The Hill, Jubilee Road, Court Hill, Elbridge Hill and Stodmarsh Road, due to the width restriction at Fordwich.

HIGHWAYS - District of Dover

HAMILTON ROAD, DEAL & STATION ROAD, WALMER (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

To enable Network Rail to carry out structural and safety inspections of railway bridges, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Hamilton Road, Deal & Station Road, Walmer, on or after 11 January 2012 as shown below.

HAMILTON ROAD, DEAL will be closed from Wednesday 11 January 2012 at 10.00 pm until Thursday 12 January 2012 at 6.00 am

The alternative route is via Mill Road, Park Avenue, Gilford Road, A258 Victoria Road, The Strand, Dover Road and Cornwall Road.

STATION ROAD, WALMER will be closed from Thursday 12 January 2012 at 10.00 pm until Friday 13 January 2012 at 6.00 am.

The alternative route is via Sydney Road, St Richard's Road, and Court Road.

Each road will be closed in the vicinity of the railway bridge.

NORTHBORNE LANE, FINGLESHAM (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of carriageway repairs, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Northbourne Lane, Finglesham, on or after 11 January 2012 for up to 2 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between Ham Lane and Finglesham Road.

The alternative route is via Ham Lane, West Street Farm Road and Northbourne Lane.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, HOUGHAM WITHOUT, DOVER) (WIDTH RESTRICTION) ORDER 2012

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER 1984

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL, acting as the local traffic authority and in exercise of their powers under sections 1 and 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the said Act of 1984, hereby make the following Order:-

Schedule

(Width Restriction)

Road Name	Length of road affected
Crook's Court Lane	From Gravel Lane northwards to its junction with Satmar Lane.
Gravel Lane	From its junction with Hougham Court Lane northwards to Crook's Court Lane.
Hougham Top Road	From its junction with Plough Hill westwards to its junction with Gravel Lane.
Plough Hill	From its junction with B2011 Folkestone Road northwards including Doctor's Lane and Stonyway Lane to the junction with Elms Hill and Elms Vale Road.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Sessions House, Maidstone ME14 1XQ, between 8.30am and 5.00pm and at Dover District Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover, during normal opening times.

Anyone wishing to support the new proposal or object to the proposed Order should send the grounds in writing to: The Traffic Schemes and Member Highway Fund Manager, Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to TRO@kent.gov.uk by noon on Monday 30 January 2012.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Gravesham

LOWER ROCHESTER ROAD GRAVESEND (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Lower Rochester Road from its junction with Church Street to Town Road/Lower Rochester Road.

The Order will become effective on, 23rd January 2012 will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; and last 2 weeks from the hours of 08:00am - 17:00pm. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Lower Rochester Road, A28 Wainscott by Pass, A226 Gravesend Road, Forge Lane and School Lane.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching works.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Maidstone

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (QUEEN ANNE ROAD, MAIDSTONE) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) (SUSPENSION OF ONE WAY ORDER) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Queen Anne Road outside of number 8 on or after

Sunday 15th January 2012 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are complete. The One Way Order on Queen Anne Road between Brooks Place and Union Street will be suspended to allow for access.

The alternative route is via Brooks Place, Albion Place. Southern Water Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary to replace manhole covers and frames. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Laura Carlisle on 01403 282848.

HIGHWAYS - District of Sevenoaks

ASHGROVE ROAD SEVENOAKS (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Ashgrove Road, Sevenoaks at its junction with Burntwood Road. The Order will become effective on 09 January 2012 and will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 09 January 2012 and last 1 week. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be: Weald Road, Windmill Road, Oak Lane, Ashgrove Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate road excavation for a sewer connection

CHART LANE, BRASSED (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Chart Lane, Brasted between Emmets Road and A25 High Street.

The Order will become effective on 08 January 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence 09 January 2012 and last 4 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Emmets Road, New Road, A25 High Street.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate electrical maintenance.

HARTFIELD ROAD, EDENBRIDGE (30 MPH SPEED RESTRICTION) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic travelling at any speed greater than 30mph on Hartfield Road, Edenbridge between Lyden Lane and Hever Lane.

The Order will become effective on 9th January 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for use when required for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 6 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The purpose of the restriction is to create a safe working area.

IDLEIGH COURT ROAD, ASH CUM RIDLEY (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Idleigh Court Road, Ash Cum Ridley from Shipley Hills Road to New Street Road.

The Order will become effective on 22nd January 2012, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 23rd January 2012 and last 3 days. These

restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: approaching from the East, South along A227 Wrotham Road then West along Chapmans Hill and then North along New Street and New Street Road. The closure when approaching from the West is the same but reversed.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching.

PENSHURST ROAD, BULLINGSTONE (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC)

TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Penshurst Road, Bullingstone between the junctions of Bullingstone Lane and Poundsbridge Hill.

The Order will become effective on 22 January 2012 and will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence on 23 January 2012 and will last three days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Baden Road, Penshurst Lane, Worthfields

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate a replacement BT pole.

HIGHWAYS - District of Shepway

MELON LANE, IVYCHURCH (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of water mains replacement works, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Melon Lane, Iychurch, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 5 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed for its entire length.

The alternative route is via Ashford Road and Newchurch Lane.

VARIOUS ROADS, FOLKESTONE (SANDGATE ROAD AREA) (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of sewer repairs, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on various roads, Folkestone at their junctions with Sandgate Road, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 2 weeks or until the works have been completed.

WESTBOURNE GARDENS

Both junctions with Sandgate Road will be closed from 9 January 2012 for up to 3 days

The east junction with Sandgate Road will remain closed on 12, 13 & 16 January

The alternative route is via Grimston Avenue and Westbourne Gardens

EARL'S AVENUE will be closed at the junction with Sandgate Road between 12 January and 20 January, except at the weekend.

The alternative route is via Sandgate Road, Castle Hill Avenue and Shorncliffe Road

TRINITY GARDENS will be closed at the junction with Sandgate Road from 23 January to 27 January

The alternative route is via Sandgate Road, Earl's Avenue and Bouverie Road West

HIGHWAYS - District of Swale

DUNKIRK ROAD SOUTH, BOUGHTON UNDER BLEAN (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to re-build a culvert, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Dunkirk Road South, Boughton under Blean, on or after 12 January 2012 for up to 2 weeks or until the works have been completed.

For further information, please contact

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation,

on 08458 247 800 (local rate)

or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways



The closure will be in place between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm each day with the road re-opened outside these hours.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of Chrislocks Wood.

There will be no access for through traffic from the junctions with between Dunkirk Road South and Horselees Road.

The alternative route is via Woodsend Road and South Street (Horselees Road).

The One-way Traffic Order in respect of Woodsend Road will be suspended.

SOUTH STREET, QUEENBOROUGH (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of water mains replacement works, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on South Street, Queenborough, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 8 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between West Street and High Street.

The alternative route is via West Street, North Road and High Street.

HIGHWAYS - District of Thanet

A299 CANTERBURY ROAD WEST, MINSTER (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to the existing road into the new carriageway, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on A299 Canterbury Road West, Minster, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 4 nights, between 8.00 pm and 6.00 am each night.

The closure is in the vicinity of the east side of the junction with Cliffsend Roundabout.

There will be no access for through traffic between Cliffsend Roundabout and the Lord of the Manor Roundabout.

The alternative route is via the new A299 'Hengist Way' from Cliffsend Roundabout, the New A256 'Richborough Way' from Sevenscore Roundabout and A256 Sandwich Road from Ebbsfleet Roundabout.

Please note this date differs from that initially publicised.

CHURCH ROAD, BROADSTAIRS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to re-lay an electrical cable to cure local faults, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Church Road, Broadstairs, on or after 23 January 2012 for up to 2 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of the junction with Nelson Place.

The alternative route is via B2052 Nelson Place, Rector Road and Shutler Road.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (HIGH STREET AND MARKET STREET, MARGATE) (20MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2012

The Kent County Council in exercise of their powers under Sections 84 (1) and (2) and 87 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act") and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act, hereby make the following Order:-

The effect of this order will revoke the order: "The Kent County Council (High Street and Market Street, Margate) (20mph Speed Limit) Order 2007".

1. No person shall drive any motor vehicle at a speed exceeding 20 miles per hour on the lengths of road specified in the Schedule to this Order.

2. The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of this Order as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

3. This Order may be cited as "The Kent County Council (High Street and Market Street, Margate) (20 mph Speed Limit) Order 2012" and shall come into operation on the 16 day of January, 2012.

Schedule 1

High Street	1.) From the junction with Market Street to the junction with Queen Street
High Street	2.) From the junction with Queen Street to the junction with Mill Lane
Market Street, The Parade, Duke Street, Newby's Place, Lombard Street	For their entire length

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent Highway Services, Javelin Way Ashford, TN24 8AD, between 8.30am and 5.00pm, and at Thanet District Council, Cecil Street, Margate, during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made thereunder have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (NETHERCOURT HILL, RAMSGATE) (RESTRICTED ROAD TRAFFIC) ORDER 2012

The Kent County Council, in exercise of their powers and under Sections 82 (1) and 87 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act hereby propose to make the following Order:-

(Nethercourt Hill, Ramsgate) (Restricted Road Traffic) Order 2012

The effect of the proposed order will revoke the order: The Kent County Council (Various Roads, Thanet) (Speed Limits) Order 1995 Schedule two (4) Nethercourt Hill, Ramsgate. By revoking this order Nethercourt Hill will become a (30mph) restricted speed road.

Nethercourt Hill, Ramsgate - Between the junction with Nethercourt Farm Road and the junction with Nethercourt Circus roundabout (a distance of approximately 400 metres).

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way Ashford, TN24 8AD, between 8.30am and 5.00pm, and at Thanet District Council, Cecil Street, Margate, during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made thereunder have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (READING STREET, BROADSTAIRS) (20MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2012

The Kent County Council in exercise of their powers under Sections 84 (1) and (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act, hereby propose to make the following Order:-

The effect of the proposed order will introduce a 20mph speed limit in Reading Street, Broadstairs on the following lengths of street:

1. No person shall drive any motor vehicle at a speed exceeding 20 miles per hour in the lengths of road specified in Schedule 1.

Schedule 1:

- Reading Street and Balliol Road, Broadstairs - For their entire length.
- Elmwood Close, Astor Road, Trinity Square, Broadstairs - For their entire length.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Kent County Council Highways, Javelin Way Ashford, TN24 8AD, between 8.30am and 5.00pm, and at Thanet District Council, Cecil Street, Margate, during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made thereunder have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose

YORK STREET, BROADSTAIRS (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of electricity cable repairs, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on York Street, Broadstairs, on or after 9 January 2012 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with Charlotte Street and Chandos Road.

The alternative route is via High Street, Belvedere Road and Dundonald Road.

The One-way Traffic Order in respect of York Street will be suspended between the junctions with Chandos Road and Dundonald Road to allow access.

HIGHWAYS - Thanet & Dover

(OLD) A256 RAMSGATE ROAD, SANDWICH (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to complete surfacing and road markings to tie in with the existing road, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on the (Old) A256 Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, as shown below.

The planned closure times are on the evenings of 13, 14 and 16 January 2012 from 8.00 pm until 6.00 am each night, with the road re-opened outside these hours.

The road will be closed from the new Ebbsfleet Roundabout near Richborough to the junction with Ebbsfleet Lane.

The alternative route is from Ebbsfleet Roundabout via the new A256 Richborough Way and new A299 Hengist Way to the Lord of the Manor Roundabout.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (A20 LONDON ROAD, AYLESFORD) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC TURNING RIGHT) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic turning right into Hermitage Lane on or after Sunday 15th January 2012 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via A20 London Road eastbound to the Coldeharbour Roundabout and return westbound on A20 London Road.

KCC Highways apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary for carriageway patching. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Jez Massy on 08458 247 800.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (BASTED LANE, PLATT, PLOUGH HILL, PLAXTOL, MILL LANE, BOROUGH GREEN) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Basted Lane, Plough Hill, Mill Lane on or after Monday 9th January 2012 for a period of up to 5 days or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via Thong Lane, Quarry Hill Road, Maidstone Road, Crouch Lane, Long Mill Lane.

BT Openreach apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary for cabling works. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Mandy Richardson on 0370 0500792.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (MILL STREET, LEVEL CROSSING, SNODLAND) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Mill Street at the level crossing on or after Wednesday 11th January 2012 between 22.30hrs and 06.30hrs for a period of up to 1 night or until such works are complete.

Network Rail apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary for tamping at the level crossing due to a track fault. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Emma Osborne on 01924 372957.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(PILGRIMS WAY, AYLESFORD) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Pilgrims Way on the eastbound carriageway of the dual carriageway from the start of dualing to Rochester Road on or after Sunday 15th January 2012 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via Bull Lane, High Street, Rochester Road.

KCC Highways apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary for carriageway patching. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Jez Massy on 08458 247 800.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(OLD HADLOW ROAD, TONBRIDGE) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Old Hadlow Road outside 46 to Stair Road on or after Monday 9th January 2012 for a period of up to 5 weeks or until such works are complete.

The alternative route is via Old Hadlow Road, Cornwallis Avenue.

Southern Water Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary to upsize the existing sewer and rebuild a manhole. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Alan Skipper on 01273 663650.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tunbridge Wells

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

(SANDROCK ROAD & ST JAMES' ROAD, TUNBRIDGE WELLS) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) (SUSPENSION OF ONE WAY ORDER & NO RIGHT TURN RESTRICTION) TEMPORARY ORDER 2012

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Sandrock Road between the junctions of Ferndale and Lansdowne Road and on St James' Road between Sandrock Road to Beulah Road on or after Monday 9th January 2012 for a period of up to 22 days or until such works are complete. The one way order on Beulah Road between St James' Road and Granville Road will be suspended and the no right turn restriction from Garden Road into Camden Road will be suspended whilst the works take place.

The alternative route is via Lansdowne Road, Garden Road, Camden Road, Albion Road, King George V Hill, Hilbert Road, Ferndale.

Southern Water Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works that are necessary to install a new manhole and connections. Should you require any further information about these works please call Southern Water on 08458 278 0845.

John Burr
Director Kent Highways
Invicta House
County Hall,
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ

Dated 8th January 2012

For further information, please contact

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation,

on 08458 247 800 (local rate)

or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways





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MARRIAGE LICENCES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND

CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004

APPROVED PREMISES FOR

CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant a renewal of an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: The Great House, Gills Green, Hawkurst
Applicant: Martial Chausy

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the renewal of the grant of approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
Regulatory Services
First Floor, Invicta House,
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX



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The circus is coming and promises to horrify us all

SEE PAGE 46



KAST OFFS

Former Kinks are looking to really get us

SEE PAGE 47

Kent Weekend



Sixties somethings

Herman's Hermits and fellow time travellers hit the road

SEE PAGE 43

PLUS: Warm yourself this winter with a few traditional Mexican dishes - **food and drink p45** Mill site transformation is set in motion - **property p49** Renault Scenic is definitely well worth a full viewing - **driving p51**

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Corinth Canal, Greek Islands & Istanbul

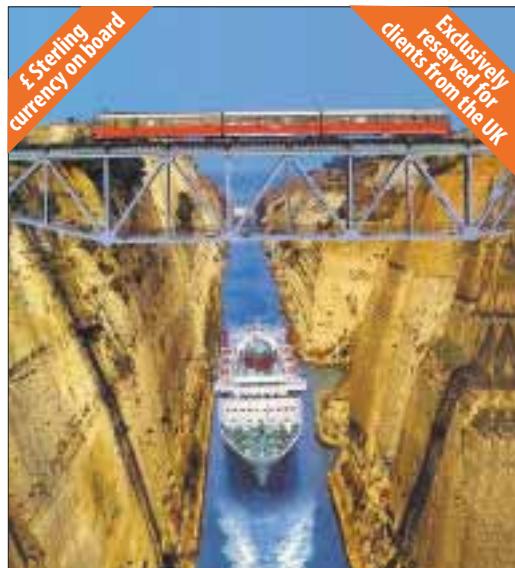
**Escorted Rail-Cruise
from London,
Ebbsfleet & Ashford**
Fly-Cruise also available
12 days
Quote GC10-KOS
From £1199pp

10 to 21 October, 2012

Join us on this rare opportunity to cruise through the amazing Corinth Canal, visit the breathtakingly beautiful Greek Islands and the amazing east-meets-west city of Istanbul - bustling, dynamic and full of heady aromas.

On our journey to join the cruise in the south of France we experience the thrill of European rail travel. We then cruise to some of the eastern Mediterranean's must-see destinations on board the mv Arion - one of very few liners able to pass through the Corinth Canal.

Accommodating up to 320 passengers, the Arion has a friendly and intimate atmosphere. She will



be exclusively reserved for guests from the UK with £ Sterling the main currency on board.

PORTS OF CALL:

- Embark France - Marseilles
- Italy - Sardinia
- Greece - Katakolon
- Greece - Corinth Canal
- Turkey - Istanbul
- Greece - Santorini
- Greece - Kefalonia
- Italy - Sicily
- Disembark Marseilles

INCLUDED:

- Escorted throughout
- Return rail travel from London St Pancras (Ashford/Ebbsfleet departures on request) or return flight to Marseilles
- 11-night Full-Board cruise sharing a standard inside cabin - upgrades available
- All transfers abroad

£50*
DEPOSIT

WHEN YOU BOOK
BY 31 JAN

Monaco Spring Gardens & Villefranche Citadel in Bloom

**Escorted Holiday by
Rail from London,
Ebbsfleet & Ashford**

6 days

Quote MR4-KOS

£699pp

Sale Price £659pp

12 to 17 April, 2012

Monaco and the Côte d'Azur have many magnificent gardens with species from distant lands. The Princess Grace Rose Garden is one of Monte Carlo's most visited attractions. Set in Fontvieille Park, bordered by palms and olive trees the rose garden is an area of calm and serenity where the scent of 4,000 roses perfumes in the air. Join us as we visit this garden, Monaco's Jardin Exotique and more. We will also visit Villefranche-sur-mer 'Citadel in Bloom' flower show overlooking the Cap Ferrat peninsula.



INCLUDED:

- Escorted throughout
- Champagne check-in at St Pancras
- Afternoon departure
- Return rail travel from London to Nice (Ebbsfleet & Ashford departures on request)

departures on request

- 1 night hotel B&B in Paris outbound
- 4 nights hotel B&B in Nice
- All garden visits
- All transfers abroad

The Riviera of Flowers Monaco & Portofino

**Escorted Holiday by
Rail from London,
Ebbsfleet & Ashford**

Quote DP-KOS

8 & 9 days

From £849pp

**16 April (8 days), 16 May,
17 & 24 Sept, 2012 (9 days)**

This super holiday taking in the French & Italian Rivieras, starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras (or join at Ebbsfleet/Ashford) before boarding the Eurostar to Lille or Paris. After an overnight stay, we continue by TGV train to Nice and Diano Marina. On the Riviera enjoy Free Drinks every night and visits to Monaco & Eze, Portofino & Dolceacqua.



INCLUDED:

- Escorted throughout
- Champagne check-in
- Return rail travel
- 1 night hotel B&B in Lille or Paris

- 6 or 7 nights half board in Diano Marina with free house wine/beers/spirits 18.00 to 23.00hrs every night
- Included excursions
- All transfers abroad

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- Return rail travel from London to Nice (Ebbsfleet & Ashford departures on request)

departures on request

- 1 night hotel B&B in Paris outbound
- 4 nights hotel B&B in Nice
- All garden visits
- All transfers abroad

Monaco Historic Grand Prix

**Escorted Holiday by
Rail from London,
Ebbsfleet & Ashford**

5 days

Quote HP5-KOS

From £699pp

10 to 14 May, 2012

Come with us to Monaco to enjoy the glitz and glamour of the Historic Grand Prix - run on the modern F1 course. Travel by train from London with an overnight stay in Paris and 3 nights in Nice.

Get close to the the action with grandstand seats for practice and race days.

INCLUDED:

- Escorted throughout
- Champagne check-in at St Pancras
- Afternoon departure
- Return rail travel from London to Nice (Ebbsfleet & Ashford departures on request)
- 1 night hotel B&B in Paris outbound
- 3 nights 3-star hotel in Nice (4-star hotel upgrade available)
- Return coastal train tickets Nice to Monaco
- 2 day seated tickets for Historic Grand Prix
- All transfers abroad



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6 days

Quote MR4-KOS

£699pp

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- Escorted throughout
- Champagne check-in at St Pancras
- Afternoon departure
- Return rail travel from London to Nice (Ebbsfleet & Ashford departures on request)

departures on request

- 1 night hotel B&B in Paris outbound
- 4 nights hotel B&B in Nice
- All garden visits
- All transfers abroad



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5 days

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10 to 14 May,

We're into something good

Years may come, years may go, but Herman's Hermits are still going strong, as **Nick Ames** discovers

HERMAN'S Hermits started out in Manchester and since 1964 the band have chalked up more than 10 hit albums, three major movies and countless television shows and concert tours all over the world – with total record sales of more than 75 million to date.

Original member Barry Whitwam has guided the group into one of the hardest-working bands in the business – still averaging more than 200 one-night-stands per year, including one in Tunbridge Wells next month.

The band will be playing alongside The Dreamers, The Tremeloes and The Union Gap UK in The Sensational 60s Experience.

The golden oldies still make up a large part of their show. Favourite songs include I'm Into Something Good, Mrs Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter, Silhouettes, Dandy, Can't You Hear My Heart Beat, There's A Kind Of Hush, No Milk Today and Sunshine Girl.

And drummer Whitwam has spent a lifetime in rock'n'roll.

"It's a bit different now from the 1960s," he said. "Now we go and meet the audience and sign autographs rather than run for our lives from a pack of screaming girls. Some had scissors – they'd be trying to cut your hair off."

On tour in 1967, Herman's Hermits were supported by The Who and Whitwam found himself celebrating his 21st birthday with legendary wildman Keith Moon.

"We were in the Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan," he said. "Keith flicked some cream from a cake at one of our band and another grabbed [Moon's] trousers. The seams broke and they fell off and he wasn't wearing any pants. A policeman we had guarding us drew his gun and Keith was hustled out the door before he could be arrested for indecent exposure."

"But he fell over and knocked his front teeth out. At the hospital four people had to hold him down as he'd had so much booze that the painkillers didn't work."

"Another time we were about to jump from a



FUN TIMES: Barry Whitwam meets Elvis Presley, above; Herman's Hermits today, left

13 motorbikes side by side coming towards us. Elvis was in the centre as they roared on to the film set. What an entrance, as they say in showbusiness.

"We found out later that Elvis had bought each of his friends their motorbikes. He was such a generous person. As he approached us, I was spellbound... it was as if God had come down from Heaven."

"Altogether we had about two hours with Elvis and talked about our tour of America. He knew we had millions of fans there, but I don't think he really understood why. Elvis seemed to want to know what our secret was – how five young lads from Manchester could make such a big impact around the world."

"I now have a large framed photo of Elvis and me mounted on my Wall of Fame at home."

■ **The Sensational 60s Experience comes to the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on Thursday, February 9, at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £23 or £21 from the box office on 01892 530613 or via www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.**

second-floor window into a swimming pool for a bet. But Keith came flying past us in cape, boots and top-hat. He'd jumped from the floor above. All bets were off from that moment on as he emerged from the pool, hat still on."

Whitwam also met Elvis Presley on one memorable occasion.

He said: "It all came about in the summer of 1965. Herman's Hermits had just finished a big tour of America in Hawaii at the Coliseum and we were booked to fly home the next day, but that night after the last show we got a telephone call from Colonel Tom Parker – Elvis's manager.

"He said Elvis Presley would like to meet Herman's Hermits on his film set the next day. I

and Peter [Noone, the group's singer] were delighted to be invited and we managed to change our tickets home for a flight 24 hours later. Karl, Keith and Derek [the rest of the band] chose to fly home, missing the chance of a lifetime.

"Elvis was filming Paradise Hawaiian Style and we were to meet him on the film set on the beach that same day at two in the afternoon.

"We arrived on the film set just before two and Colonel Tom met us and told us Elvis had just gone out for a ride on his motorbike with his friends and would be back very soon. Just then we heard what sounded like thunder coming from down the beach a long way off.

"As the sound got louder, we could see about



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BLACK female, professional, African, 5ft 2ins, size 12, late 30's, hardworking, no ties, seeks man for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389090

FEMALE 42, African, understanding, seeks romantic, understanding, outgoing male, 45-50 for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383001

MARY fun loving brunette, seeking friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382689

BERYL 57, likes fishing, home life, seeks gent, 60-65. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382503

TALL slim, blonde, blue eyed voluptuous female, seeks older male, 70 plus for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382453

TRISHA teacher, blonde, attractive, uncomplicated, undemanding, non materialist well travelled, likes reading, walking, laughing, seeks tall, professional male, 60's for simple joys. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379891

ANGELA Scottish female, dark hair, green eyes, attractive, new to the area, no ties, OHAC, seeks gentle male for good times and more. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382227

DAWN young looking slim attractive fashionable 40's female, cultured and educated, discreet, WLTM genuine male for mutually convenient relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382223

KATIE pretty slim blonde female, 35, N/S, likes pubs, countryside, meals out, seeking outgoing male for fun times, maybe relationship. Interested? ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382205

CLARE petite dark haired attractive female with lots of interests, seeking male for mutual companionship. Must be respectful and discreet. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382203

LISA attractive dental nurse 25, been hurt in the past, looking for romantic male, 35-50yrs for loving friendship, maybe more. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382201

SUSIE tactile 33y old female who loves fast cars and motorbikes, seeks genuine male prepared to live life in the fast lane, 35-50yrs. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382163

SARAH 29y old slim brunette with many interests seeks sincere male, 28-40yrs for fun times and more. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382161

TEFF 32, slim, hazel eyes, long hair, curly size 10, likes cosying up, cuddles, tickles, sick of being lonely and bored, not looking for complications just love. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382159

ANN slim blonde female, lovely blue eyes, great personality, outgoing, employed, OHAC, WLTM caring 40's male for adult fun and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382085

JACQUELINE 49, medium build, brown hair, likes animals female, likes keep fit, home life, looking for similar genuine romantic and good friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382081

TIA 38y old attractive blonde female, likes keep fit, home life, looking for similar genuine romantic and good friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382079

WENDY enjoys most things in life and is up for anything, whatever you fancy? I'm willing to give it a go! Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382079

MARIA 47, curly blonde hair, 5ft 6ins, size 14, GSOH, likes reading, walks, WLTM kind, friendly, fun loving gent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380509

SUSAN 53, 5ft 3ins, slim, likes cinema, theatre, meals out, looking for male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380317

Gwen lovely dark haired, dark blue eyed slim sensual female with GSOH, WLTM male 35-50 for fun dates and romantic nights in together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380443

DEBBIE dark haired passionate, classy, discreet female looking for professional intelligent male wanting mutual companionship. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381729

JULIE late 70's, petite, widowed seeks gent with car and GSOH who loves animals. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379727

TANYA 28, beautiful black skin mum, very confident and all out of love. Lonely and looking for good company with experienced respectful man. Any age/looks. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381727

FEMALE 74, 5ft 1ins, artistic, versatile, seeks nice caring gent for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380001

LADY late 50's, new to area, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378403

IRENE looking for happy go lucky relationship with trustworthy male for romantic evenings in, quiet nights out, passionate weekends away and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381701

SHIRLEY young looking tall attractive fit female, OHAC, open-minded, varied interests seeks tall male for genuine dates. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380005

BLACK female, 35, GSOH, caring, loving, kind, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376611

CLAIRE 38 blue eyes, blonde voluptuous, curly, looking for professional gent up to 50yrs LTR. Call me to meet up for a casual drink and chat. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381731

JO bubbly, fun, red hair, green eyes, 5ft 5ins, likes nights out, dvds, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 374327

YOUNG free single female, seeks male for nights in/out, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379865

LOVELY tall slim nurse, very caring and fun but missing that va-voom! Seeks adventurous male who's up for fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381463

ALICIA attractive petite female 22yrs, new to dating scene and area, loves nights in/out, WLTM male for adult fun. ACA, can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375157

FOLKESTONE lady 57, likes animals, walks, drinks, good food, passionate, seeks likeminded male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375927

SUSIE seeking tall honest guy for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375883

CHRIS new to area, late 50's, slim, 5ft 5ins, fair hair, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378725

TANYA attractive, fit, slim, fun, all a hot blooded male wants! Now I have your attention, 37yr single female looking for the real deal. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381335

CHRISTMAS special! Tia shy pretty female 39, seeks outgoing man to coax me out of my shell, for good times and old langsyne. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381333

ANITA 58, 5ft 3ins, auburn hair, green eyes, likes swimming, bowling, shows, holidays, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387416

KATH slim, petite size 10, hard-working attractive, OHAC, seeking loving romantic guy to enjoy cosy nights in cuddling up with a dvd and glass of wine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381339

RACHEL blonde brown eyed slim but feminine female, 32, likes wine/dining, theatre, WLTM reliable male for dinner dates and romancing. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381319

TANYA 28, beautiful black skin mum, very confident and all out of love. Lonely and looking for good company with experienced respectful man. Any age/looks. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 377531

CARMEL blonde brown eyed girl, employed with OHAC, likes meals out, walking, looking for loving relationship with caring down to earth male. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380001

HANNAH 34 slim petite green eyed single mum with many interests, seeking discreet older male for mutual companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376591

KAZ 32y old intellectual mixed race female, likes gym, meal in/out, seeks reliable, honest male, 38-58yrs to get to know for her. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376591

NATALIE blonde blue eyed busy, 39yrs medium build, no ties, life is good but I'm missing someone to love and lust after. Can you help? Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376589

KERRY 31 outgoing confident with laid back attitude, looking for relaxed relationship with tactile male, any age/looks/size or status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381697

TARA 5ft big blue eyed babe with a cute smile looking for older sugar daddy who is not afraid to spend a little to live a lot! Good times always guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379865

LIDDY 28y old genuine kind hearted girl looking for older male, 34-46yrs who can replace the other half of me that's missing. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375157

ALICIA attractive petite female 22yrs, new to dating scene and area, loves nights in/out, WLTM male for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375157

FOLKESTONE lady 57, likes animals, walks, drinks, good food, passionate, seeks likeminded male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375927

SUSIE seeking tall honest guy for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375883

CHRIS new to area, late 50's, slim, 5ft 5ins, fair hair, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 378725

TASHA 37 blonde tanned and very pretty, seeks well dressed older male with GSOH for fun meets, loving treats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375605

FULL time vacancy arisen for open minded male seeking uncomplicated relationship with slim professional 39y old female with wicked sense of humour. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381347

LYN 58, likes meals out, cinema, holidays, coast, theatre, shows, countryside, pubs, N/S, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376187

CARRIE 28y old Christmas cracker, seeking easygoing confident character to pull me! ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380855

FUN loving male, 49, good job, likes sport, seeks female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389170

TONY good looking male, seeking female for fun times, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389166

RICHARD 47, likes theatre, holidays, museums, travel, countryside, walks, looking for happy LTR with female, 36-63. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383173

MICHAEL 58, retired, 6ft, many interests, fit, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382519

STEVE designer, 5ft 10ins, good looking, seeking friendly lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382601

IRVING 72, tactile, N/S, likes bowls, seeking attractive N/S female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382567

CHRIS 33, likes marathon running, nights out, cinema, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382959

EASYGOING cheerful, decent man, 64, 6ft, 13st, blue eyes, educated, romantic, seeks nice, slim, elegant female, 47-57. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382933

YOUNG male, 55, seeks attractive black girlfriend, N/S, likes country pubs, seaside, music, semi professional musician. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383151

PHIL 62, caring, considerate, many interests, music, travel, nights in, GSOH, seeks caring, loving female with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382409

MEL tall curly attractive blonde, loves cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine, looking for some male attention and company. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379971

AUDREY recently widowed, seeks lonely gent for friendship and conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381213

ALICE 30's female, slim, lovely smile, not that happy at the moment but hoping you might change that, you're nothing to loose? Call me. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 379201

LISA sexy blonde 31yrs, extremely fit and outgoing, seeking male for casual friendship with benefits. Discretion assured. Any age/looks. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380879

TRISH tall slim brunette, honest, reliable, affectionate, OHAC, no ties, outgoing, loves Indian food, seeking male 39-50yrs for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380877

CAROL attractive lady of leisure, solvent, OHAC, WLTM sincere gent willing to entertain and share all of life's naughty indulgences with me. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380857

TASHA 37 blonde tanned and very pretty, seeks well dressed older male with GSOH for fun meets, loving treats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 375605

PROFESSIONAL female, late 30's, own business, seeks honest male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388370

DONNA 26yrs, blue eyes, blonde, bored of spending nights in alone, looking for average looking male, 23-55yrs for friend. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376563

DAVID light hearted positive 58y old male, has high expectation of what he can offer a woman aged between 30-52. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383275

EARLY 40's male, handsome, strong, looking for fun times with likeminded female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 389066

MALE 44 likes meals out, cinema, seeks considerate, outgoing female of similar age for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388960

MALE seeks female for friend, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388960

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SINCERE gent, 68, seeks lady, 50-60, intelligent with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381827

60YR old guy seeks black/Asian/Oriental lady for adult fun and friendship. Discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381825

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32YR old handsome male, seeks likeminded male for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 382317

PETER 51, 5ft 7ins, slim-medium build, CD, seeks active male, 55-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388970

JACK 65, seeks male, 40-70 for occasional meetings. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381535

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Traditional Mexican fare proved a delicious way to end the year

THE day before New Year's Eve was always going to be a quiet night for restaurants.

Combined with dismal, cold weather and driving rain, many had even decided to shut for the night.

But while some closed up and prepared for the following day's festivities, Escondido in Sandgate opened its doors and, surprisingly (to me, anyway) the place was busy.

The restaurant, set back from the seafront on a corner of busy Sandgate high street, is just a stone's throw from its previous location, which suffered a fire in 2008.

Its relocation, however, seems to have brought a fresh feel to that end of the high street, which over the years has had to compete with rival watering holes and restaurants just metres from the water's edge.

Other businesses tried and failed, but something about Escondido tells me it's here to stay.

The restaurant itself is bright and welcoming, with the typical Mexican orange-and-yellow décor, and the staff friendly and attentive without being intrusive.

After being seated, my guest and I ordered a carafe of Pinot (£11.99) and looked over the menu.

We'd made the error of turning up ravenous and so quickly placed our order.

RESTAURANT REVIEW



To start, we chose the queso fondue (£9.99) to share: melted Monterey Jack cheese with sweet chillies, spring onions, potato wedges and chorizo sausage.

It was delicious and indulgent, everything you would want from a Mexican dish: big flavours and a combination of hot, spicy and sweet.

For my second course I chose the traditional Mexican dish of fajitas (£12.49) with crispy duck coated in a chilli-and-orange glaze.

The sizzling plate was served with guacamole, tomato salsa, sour cream, cheese, jalapenos, refried beans, salad and flour tortillas.

And they certainly didn't scrimp on the por-

tions. My guest went for the chilli crock pot (£11.49): chunks of sirloin and minced beef with Mexican spices and a cheeky slug of beer, coated in melted cheese with salsa, guacamole, sour cream and flour tortillas on the side.

The main dishes were fantastic, but my guest and I could barely move afterwards.

The dessert menu, however, was far too tempting to ignore and my dining companion ordered a refreshing lemon sorbet (£3.99).

I decided to indulge yet again and opted for the waffles, which came with chocolate chunks, maple syrup, blueberries, strawberries and vanilla ice-cream (£4.99). But that signalled the end for me. After waving the white flag, I sadly had to leave the last few bites.

Escondido was warm, welcoming and fresh, the food absolutely delicious. But for those of you with eyes bigger than your bellies, be warned – I was so full I practically had to be carried out of the restaurant.

The final bill came to £55.44.

Marijke Cox

■ Escondido, 28 High Street, Sandgate, Folkestone CT20 3AP

Telephone: 01303 246624

Email: eat@escondido.co.uk

Website: www.escondido.co.uk

FARMERS' MARKETS

DARTFORD: The market began in November 2005 at the request of Dartford Borough Council and has been running since then. It is held in the pedestrian area of Dartford high street and is open to the public between 10am and 2pm on the third Friday of the month.

EGERTON: This farmers' market has now been trading every Friday from 2pm to 4.30pm for almost five years, with most of the original stall-holders still selling at the market in the Millennium Hall.

MERSHAM: Featuring produce from the immediate area is the market now held at the Farmers Arms, Mersham Forstal, between 2.30pm and 6.30pm on every second and fourth Friday of the month.

MEOPHAM: This farmers' market has been operating since July 2004 in the overflow car park of the Meopham fitness and tennis centre on the first Sunday of the month from 9am to 12.30pm.

HILDENBOROUGH: Every Tuesday in St John's Church Centre the Hildenborough farmers' market has an average of 20 stalls each week offering a wide range of fresh local produce of high quality at competitive prices.

IWADE: The village hall farmers' market opened in February 2009; it takes place on the first Sunday of the month from 10am to 1pm, offering seasonal local produce.

■ For more information on farmers' markets around the county, visit www.farmersmarkets.org.uk

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The Royal Wedding Souvenir Edition marks this special occasion, with exclusive access to events at the Abbey, a very royal photo album, what Sarah Burton said about the best-kept secret in the run-up to the wedding, plus a look at what's in store for the new Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Plus, we take a look at royal romances through the ages, the history of the wedding dress and how global royal weddings match up.

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A wholly wild family affair Theme team

Howletts Wild Animal Park, Bekesbourne
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www.aspinallfoundation.org

VISITORS to Howletts Wild Animal Park will discover the intricacies of family life in the animal kingdom this month. January's theme is Family Fortunes and there will be

themed events and activities for visitors to join.

Animal director Neil Spooner said: "We have decided to have a specific theme each month at the park.

"Visitors can become involved in the activities and trails and find out more about the animals here and our conservation work."

Every weekend throughout January there will be a self-guided trail to follow to learn about family groupings, along with a range of talks and animal family games in the education centre.

Prepare for the kings of swing Pleasure beat

Astor Theatre, Deal
 Friday, January 13
 01304 370220
www.theastor.org

THE Astor is welcoming King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys next week for some much-needed upbeat New Year music.

The group are renowned

around the world, having been on the road for two decades playing every European country as well as the US and Russia – they have recorded 10 CDs.

Dazzling musicianship and entertaining stage performances have seen the group make more than 50 TV appearances and 75 radio broadcasts.

Regularly described as the kings of swing, Paul Jones on BBC Radio 2 called them "the hardest act to follow since the parting of the Red Sea". A must-see in an intimate venue.



Local, live and ready to rock Get Wired!

Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
 Saturday, January 14
 01892 530613

SICK of the same old boring pop music in the charts? Then head for a local and live show at the Assembly Hall Theatre next week.

A new live-music event for unsigned Kent bands looking to make a break into the business is set to lift the roof.

The Wired show will include performances from Intraverse, Fearless Vampire Killers, Sorrel Nation, Alice Amelia and Guy Osborn. Headliners Intraverse boast rock-solid rhythms and two diamond-edged guitars as funky as they are heavy. Their release Please Don't Share Your Kisses has climbed the iTunes chart, the band recently released a video for Grant Me Permission, and they played the Download festival in the summer. Tickets cost £6.50 and are available at www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



A big top of horrors The circus of fears

The Orchard Theatre, Dartford
 Thursday, March 8
 01322 220 000
www.orchardtheatre.co.uk

JUST 16 years after its conception at the 1995 Glastonbury Festival, the Circus of Horrors has achieved cult status.

It has dragged circus screaming and shouting into the 21st century.

Having already toured the world, the circus is back with a new show focusing on Berlin in 1921, three years after the First World War. This was the roaring twenties, a decadent decade that featured the birth of the cabaret.

One particular venue was struggling to make ends meet until Dr Haze rolled into town with his Vampire Vaudeville show, featuring twisted contortionists, flying aerialists, demon dwarfs, voodoo warriors and sword-swallowers.

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Walk tall with leading artist Hamish Fulton

Turner Contemporary, Margate

Tue, January 17, to Mon, May 7 01843 233 000

TOP artist Hamish Fulton's first one-man show in a UK public gallery since 2002 is heading to the Turner. The exhibition brings together works from the early 1970s to the present, including a new film of a group walk in Margate commissioned by Turner Contemporary in the lead-up to the opening of the gallery.

Based in Kent, Fulton has made walking the basis of his art for the past three decades, producing photography, text and sketches that evolve from the experience of solo and group walks. He describes himself as a "walking artist". Also on show is a group of prints, photo-text pieces and woodworks, many of which have not been exhibited in the UK before.

For more information, visit www.turnercontemporary.org.



A horrible lot ... all in 3D History show

Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells

Tue, Jan 31, to Sat, Feb 4 01892 530613

HAVE you ever wanted to travel back in time and see what it was like during the reign of tyrannical monarchs and roaming warriors? Well, with the on-stage

Horrible Histories, now you can.

Using actors and groundbreaking 3D special effects, this astounding show is guaranteed to thrill you and your children.

Historical figures and events will come alive on stage and hover at your fingertips. Watch evil Elizabeth, hear the legends about the torturing Tudors and find out the fate of Henry's headless wives and his punch-up with the Pope.

Tickets are priced at £10 and available from www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Kast Offs in name only Some Kinks

The Forum, Tunbridge Wells

Saturday, March 3, at 8pm 01892 557333

Tickets £13 in advance

THREE former members of legendary mod band The Kinks have got together to form their own tribute act. The Kast Off Kinks include Mick Avory, Ian Gibbons and

Jim Rodford, who all took their places alongside the great Davies Brothers on stage at different times in the band's long history.

Alongside Dave Clark, who has worked with The Beach Boys and Noel Redding, the group produce the closest thing to the original Kinks available today.

Top songs like You Really Got Me, Waterloo Sunset, All Day And All Of The Night, Lola and Tired Of Waiting are all performed live as the boys look to keep the fabulous music alive for fans old and new.



The age of the GEEK Expo for games fans

Winter Gardens, Margate

Wednesday to Sunday, February 15-19 01843 292795

www.margatewintergardens.co.uk

GAMES fans will be thrilled to learn that Margate is hosting an exhibition just for them. The Games Expo East Kent, or GEEK, exhibition is a contemporary event developed to celebrate the culture of videogaming and attract national attention to the regeneration of the area, as well as celebrate Britain's videogame heritage. GEEK 2012 is built around an interactive day featuring more than 150 playable consoles, networked PCs and thousands of games. The Winter Gardens will host the main exhibition showcasing the history of video games from the earliest examples to the most recent blockbusters.

Tickets are priced at £12.

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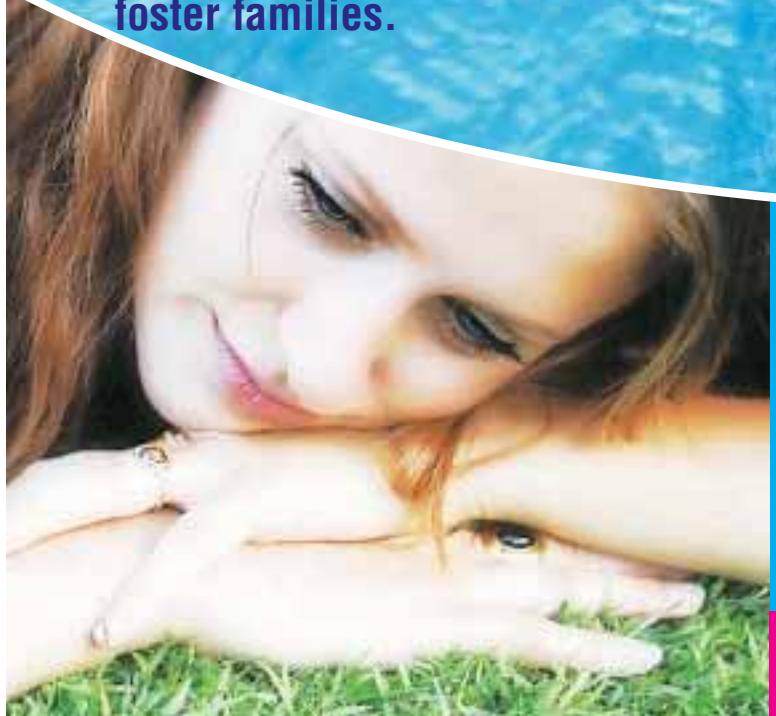
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Transformation of mill site begins

THE start of work at an old papermill site in Dover was marked when the foundations for the first apartments were laid alongside substantial new infrastructure.

Partners including the Homes And Communities Agency (HCA), Gillcrest Homes and Town & Country housing group were at the Buckland Mill site to view progress.

This was part of the transfer of Regional Development Agency land, property and other assets to the HCA. In total, 73 sites were transferred from the South East Regional Development Agency into the HCA's newest programme, Economic Assists.

The HCA is working with Dover District Council to make sure the site is developed to meet local need through joint business planning. As such, a business plan is being prepared with the aim of completing development within the next 10 years. The business plan is set to be finalised early this year.

Naisha Polaine of the HCA said: "This site is in an area with low affordable-housing provision and relatively high unemployment levels. Being able to reuse old buildings and land and bring them up to date for housing, and potentially other uses, is going to really benefit the area, so we are delighted to be involved."

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The first phase includes 56 affordable homes and a care home of 80 beds due to be completed by the end of 2012.

Tim Warren, Town & Country new initiatives manager, said: "We have been working in partnership on this scheme for some time, so it is great to see the foundations going down as I know it marks the first steps to what will be a modern, vibrant and thoroughly exciting development, providing much-needed affordable housing in the area."

Discussions are ongoing around future phases, which could include converting the former mill director's house into offices, and private housing

with the conversion of some of the old mill buildings fronting Crabble Hill.

Paul Watkins, leader of Dover District Council, said: "We are very pleased to see construction taking place, bringing this important site back into use as part of the major regeneration of the district."

Bad survey? You could still buy the home

HOUSE-BUYERS spend months searching for the right property and speaking to lenders to secure funding, but all too often their hopes are shattered when the results of a building survey are not good. However, buyers shouldn't just walk away, says Buss Murton Law.

Solicitor Gemma Blizzard at the Tunbridge Wells firm said: "While it can be very disappointing to both the buyer and the seller to find out a problem has been uncovered, buyers shouldn't immediately walk away without considering all the options.

"Firstly, put the faults into context. It will be difficult to find any house which a surveyor deems to be perfect – it is their job to uncover faults, so ask them to explain the findings.

"Don't forget you can ask for the advice of experts, sometimes without having to pay out.

Ask a local builder, electrician or plumber to give you their opinion on the work and how urgently it would need remedying."

Good communication can be key. According to Ms Blizzard: "If the issue is more serious, talk to the seller and ask them to obtain a structural engineer's report to explain the fault. In the current market, sellers should be happy to do a fair share of the homework to provide you with enough information to make an informed decision, but the structural report is only binding between the seller and the structural engineer and as such you would not be able to sue the engineer if it was found to be incorrect.

"Finally, don't be afraid to negotiate on the price. If the seller really wants to move, they will have to accept their property has faults and will need to adjust the price accordingly."

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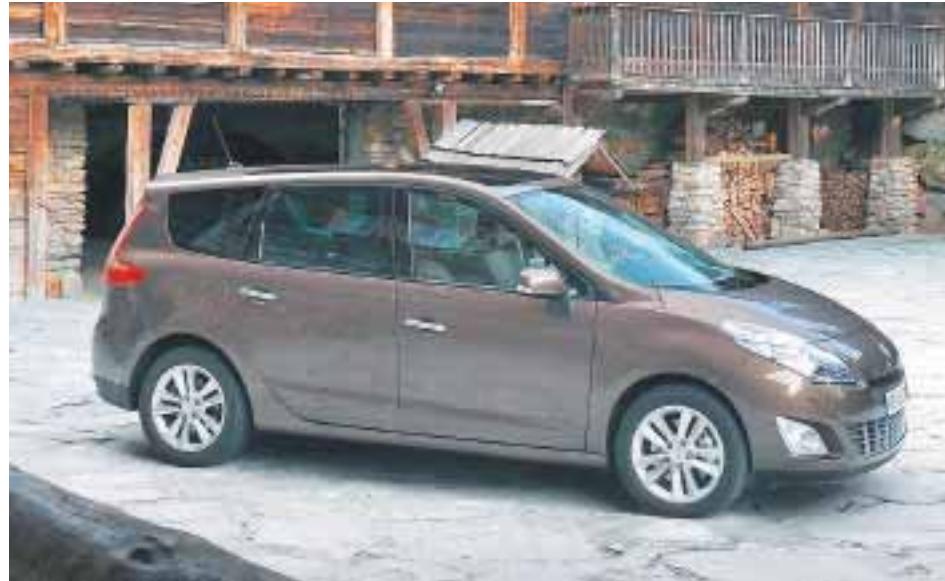
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Renault takes the stunning Scénic route into new year

By Sam Davison

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IT has to bear the best ever name for a MPV, and was the car that sparked the boom in such flexible family motors.

And though the pioneering Renault Scénic – launched in 1996 – has since lost its leadership of a compact MPV sector now dominated by the Vauxhall Zafira and several Citroën Picassoos, it remains a star.

Furthermore, both the five-seat Scénic and its seven-seat Grand Scénic sister have had a revamp for 2012 that will enhance their popularity.

Due in showrooms for February, they have a revised nose, with gloss black and chrome detailing, plus LED daytime running lights and new rear lights.

Buyers are even more spoilt for engine choice, with two new eco-friendly units in a five-strong line-up: a turbocharged 1.2 TCe 115 petrol and 1.5 dCi 110 Stop/Start diesel – the latter can average nearly 70mpg.

There is also the 1.6 dCi 130 diesel, which Renault claims is the world's most powerful engine of its type for its size, and it's frugal too – 64.2 mpg (combined cycle) with CO2 emissions of just 115g/km, equating to zero road tax in

RAOQUE

Price:
from £16,615 to
£22,300

Driving appeal:



Image:



Space:



Value:



Running costs:



Reliability:



How green?:



Best rival:

Vauxhall Zafira

year one and £30/year thereafter.

We managed a preview of the new-look range in a top spec Grand Scénic Dynamique Tom Tom – it has a factory-fitted sat nav developed jointly by Renault and budget sat nav developer Tom Tom.

Priced at £22,200, you get a lot for your money, including all the electrics you would expect plus cruise control, rain-sensing wipers, rear sunblinds, seat back tables for the rear passengers and smart 16-inch alloys, and I would be tempted by the £1,500 leather pack – black leather seats, heated front ones with electric adjustment for the driver.

Standard equipment also includes a jaw-dropping 40 stowage spaces – totalling 83 litres plus an impressive boot volume of 564 litres, expanding to 2,063 litres with rear seats folded – the five rear chairs can be arranged in any format according to passenger/cargo needs.

Our car was fitted with the 1.6 dCi 130 diesel, which proved every bit as impressive as Renault says it is, with good acceleration, smooth running and, of course, those frugal consumption figures.

Progress is biased more towards a superb ride rather than tight handling, but that is why most customers will be buying this stylish MPV.

CX-5 adopts new tech approach to crossover sector

MAZDA made an inauspicious start in the SUV sector when it launched the CX-7 in 2007.

The newcomer was big and sporty, but a thirsty petrol engine as the only power option was not what buyers wanted just as a recession loomed.

A diesel arrived eventually, but the chance to stake a claim in a lucrative sector was lost.

At least for the time being – but Mazda plans an all-new sporting SUV/crossover launch for spring and it will also be the flag waver for a new campaign by the Japanese marque.

The new CX-5 will make use of SKYACTIV technology that the Zoom-Zoom brand has been working on since 2006, claimed to pioneer a new way of building cars making greater use of standardised architecture beneath the skin and enhancing Mazda's drive to slash weight, consumption and emissions.

It also wears a bold new

five-point grille tipped to become Mazda's new corporate face, and should compete well against the likes of the Nissan Qashqai and Ford Kuga, and possibly the classy VW Tiguan and Honda CR-V.

It will launch with a diesel engine available in two outputs and one petrol unit and we can expect it to maintain Mazda's sporty reputation while being green – an automatic engine stop-start for sluggish traffic conditions will be standard – which means it should appeal to company car drivers on both counts.

Early reports suggest that the in-built lightness of the car delivers great agility and virtually none of the lean associated with high-riding SUV-style cars and, like rivals such as the Qashqai, it will be available in front-wheel drive or 4x4 formats.

Will this be the car to crack this sector for Mazda?



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Model shown is Aveo 1.4 LTZ

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*Price relates to Aveo 1.2 LS featuring metallic paint at an extra cost of £375. Available at participating Dealers only. Specification varies across the range. Image shown is an Aveo 1.4 LTZ, available at £11,195. Offer ends 31st March 2012. 5 year warranty up to 100,000 miles, expires whichever occurs first. This offer includes Chevrolet's standard Customer Care Commitment of a 2 year unlimited mileage manufacturer's warranty, and third year manufacturer's warranty with a 60,000 mile limitation. Years 4 and 5 are an insurance-backed warranty up to a maximum of 100,000 miles. The warranty excludes wear and tear and serviceable items and the vehicle has to be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's servicing schedule. 5 year warranty is available on retail registrations only. Models shown in the thumbnails are not all UK specification and therefore not currently available in the UK. Vehicles currently available in the UK are Spark, New Aveo, Cruze, Orlando, Captiva and Corvette. For more information visit www.chevrolet.co.uk. Price correct at time of press. Calls may be recorded and monitored for training purposes.

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Aveo range: Urban - 31.4 (9.0) - 67.2 (4.2), Extra Urban - 52.3 (5.4) - 85.6 (3.3), Combined - 41.5 (6.8) - 78.4 (3.6). CO₂ emissions 159 - 95g/km.

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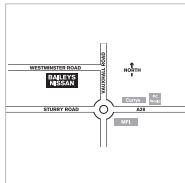
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Vehicle shown for illustration purposes. Participating dealers only. Terms and conditions apply, for full details refer to nissan.co.uk/cared4



Countryman leads the way

By Sam Davison

editorial@archant.co.uk

MINI'S launch of the Countryman in 2010 was more pivotal than it appeared.

Until then, every Mini model was visibly derived from the original hatchback – the convertible was a roofless spin-off and the Clubman was the estate version.

The bigger five-door Countryman was a genuinely different model though; the BMW marque had become a serious brand.

The Countryman was also pitched into a burgeoning new sector – the crossover segment launched by Nissan's fabulously successful Qashqai. It means it competes as a family hatchback, MPV and, with the four-wheel drive ALL4 option, an SUV. The styling has elements too of the 'funky chunky' SUV look that characterises the Qashqai and its rivals.

However, the Countryman can't really compete with the Nissan, as it doesn't have the same space – Toyota's Urban Cruiser is a closer rival.

Still, the Mini is a premium and image-building buy that appeals to many, and at a sensible price starting from £16,445, with ALL4 versions from an equally appealing £20,400 (Mini Cooper D Countryman ALL4) – you pay a modest £1,200 extra for 4x4 versus standard front-wheel drive versions like our Cooper D Countryman (£19,210) test car.

Judging by comments during the loan, the jury is out on whether the Countryman has the visual appeal of its hatchback sister and its offshoots, but the car definitely looks better for the white roof – a no-cost option along with door mirror caps in white, though you can pay for extra customisation. This has the visual effect of lowering the car, which rides higher – SUV style – than the Mini hatchback.

The interior, as ever with Mini, is exemplary. It uses the same retro format as the hatchback series with a big circular display aping the 60s

MINI COOPER D COUNTRYMAN: PRICE £19,210



STYLISH LITTLE MOVER:
The Mini Countryman's interior pays homage to the 1960s car, but the new model's high driving position makes it quite unlike the originals

original's speedometer – speed is also shown digitally dead ahead of the driver.

However, you do have to access many electronic controls via a centralised system rather than separate buttons and it takes time to become instinctive, so it feels more like a gimmick than a labour-saver. The L-shaped handbrake handle also seems a like a pointless adaptation, even an encumbrance at times.

But the interior is well constructed and pays homage to the 60s car. The higher driving position though, is quite unlike the original, giving a superb view out everywhere – except around unusually thick windscreen pillars.

Ironically, the inner space design of the 60s original is not reflected in this modern day revision; the latest crash protection is part of the reason, but the Countryman's need to be more premium means that it can't make do with 1960s seats.

Instead, the car has thicker and classier looking versions; comfort levels are first class,

FACT FILE

Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★
Value:	★★★
Reliability:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★
Road tax:	£30 (zero year one)
Best rival:	Toyota Urban Cruiser

Kent dealers:

Broad Oak	
Ashford	01233 500555
Canterbury	01227 828899
Arden	
Maidstone	01622 791333
Cooper	
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Sevenoaks	0844 701 9804

though the middle rear seat is minimalist and most owners will use it in its secondary role – folded down as an armrest for the two passengers on either side.

All three seats fold independently though, giving the Countryman MPV-style load flexibility ahead of a deep and surprisingly spacious boot for its size.

Out on the road, the Countryman springs another surprise; despite its height it does not have that MPV/SUV tendency to lean into the corners and proves to be as much a point-and-shoot driver pleaser as its smaller sisters – even with the run flat winter tyres fitted to the test car.

I found it an excellent all-rounder during a long trip to the Midlands and back via motorways and back roads.

The 112bhp 1.6-litre diesel delivers good low down punch for a fast take-off at junctions, but also cruises quietly in its tall sixth gear – an average around 60mpg should be possible for most drivers.

First GEAR

MOTORING NEWS



Renault plugs into Maidstone

MOTORLINE Renault of Maidstone has been named as one of only 21 UK Renault ZE Expert dealers upgraded to handle the French marque's new range of electric vehicles.

The move has been triggered by the arrival of Renault's tax-beating Kangoo Van ZE (zero emission), which is expected to appeal to urban operators with lots of stops.



Lexus looking to the future

WILL they build it? We hope so.

This futuristic concept coupé, the LF-LC 2+2, comes from Japanese brand Lexus.

Toyota's premium arm says it is "an exercise to explore the future of Lexus design", but car fans will say "you cannot afford not to build this car" – it's the kind of halo model to put Lexus on the map against German rivals.



X-Trail's given Platinum feel

NISSAN has created an ultimate X-Trail SUV and it's not surprising it has been called the Platinum.

Priced from £29,180, just 200 are to be sold in the UK.

It comes with extra chrome, leather upholstery, electrically-adjustable and heated front seats, plus other goodies. Like all X-Trails, it is also a good mix of affordable on- and off-roader.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data – Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km): New Astra SRi hatchback: Urban: 28.5 (9.9) – 60.1 (4.7), Extra-urban: 49.6 (5.7) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined: 39.2 (7.2) – 72.4 (3.9). CO2 emissions 169 – 104g/km.

*Not available on Expression, E5, E5 Tech models. **Finance Deposit Allowance not available on Astra GTC. Model shown is New Astra SRi 5dr. Finance provided by Vauxhall Finance, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff, CF15 7YT. Finance is subject to status, terms and conditions. Applicants must be 18 years or over. Offer applies to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only excluding B2B). All other customers are excluded. Offer available on orders or registrations before 19 December 2011. †Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first registered keeper, 100,000 mile limit. Terms and conditions apply.

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Motability



VAUXHALL

Hyundai takes the i30 higher

By Sam Davison

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ONWARDS and upwards should sum up the expectations of any company, but Hyundai has adopted the motto with a vengeance.

It only produced its first car in 1968 and even that was a Ford Cortina built as a co-operative venture with Ford; but today, along with its Kia subsidiary, it is the fourth largest carmaker in the world.

Most impressive has been its progress in the last five years or so, with the 'i' range of mainstream cars. They might not have the iconic status of Apple electronic products prefixed by the same vowel, but they have transformed the UK buyer's view of the Korean brand.

The first 'i' car was the i30, launched in 2007, targeting the Ford Focus, Vauxhall Astra and VW Golf no less and making a good fist of it with high quality and dynamics added to Hyundai's known virtues of value and specification, plus reliability backed by a five-year warranty.

More i-models followed, using the same blueprint and with increasing emphasis on quality



FLUIDIC:
Hyundai's
stylish 'i'
cars are
constantly
being
improved

and style, the latest being the classy i40 Tourer and saloon tackling the Ford Mondeo sector.

No sooner have these arrived though and we are facing a replacement i30 early next year, with more evidence of Hyundai's onwards and upwards obsession.

Early glimpses of the car show a far more sophisticated look, clearly inspired by what Hyundai calls the 'fluidic' lines of the i40 and geared to European tastes. It will also be built, as before, at Hyundai's Czech Republic plant.

The new i30 will have a good range of powertrains: four engines with a total of six power options and CO₂ emissions below 100 g/km thanks to an upgraded version of the current car's popular, smooth and lively 1.6-litre diesel.

It will launch around March, initially as a five-door hatchback, but we can expect a useful yet stylish estate to follow.

In the meantime, check out Kent Hyundai dealers for some top deals on run-out examples of the current car – still a stout competitor in its class and unusually well-equipped. Don't rule out some specials or trim upgrades, either.



'Tis the season of winter driving

COMPARED with recent winters, this one has let us off lightly so far.

However, never forget how the weather can turn, so heed the usual tips on winter driving.

The most entertaining list issued to the media comes from Nissan, which is promoting a free winter health check until March 1 and a set of winter tyres from just £199.

The 15-point check covers areas such as, exhaust system, front brake pads/shoes, tyre tread depth, and fluid levels.

The vehicle must be a Nissan at least three years old or more to be eligible, but the winter driving advice applies to all and makes use of the latest wrinkles... and some humour:

■ Don't just rely on the radio for announcements about accidents, road closures, and other information. Use modern methods such as Twitter: many councils and the Highways Agency have Twitter Gitter to share the latest information on road conditions.

■ Top up the washer bottle with a higher concentration of fluid in the water than usual, to prevent freezing. Then give the washers a good squirt so the stronger fluid can reach the nozzle.

■ Take a survival pack: warm clothing, a phone (with charger) and plenty of fuel are obvious items, and keep some long-life food in the car too, but don't take anything you'll enjoy eating or you may scoff it before a real emergency.

■ Gauge speed carefully in snow and ice – but don't drive too slowly or you'll



BE SAFE: Nissan is offering free winter health check for any of its cars over three years old, including the Murano

lose momentum, especially up hills.

■ Black ice is invisible, and can be deadly. When the temperature dips, be especially wary of roads alongside misty, open fields. If you see an accident, car-shaped hole in a hedge or fresh crumpled car debris up ahead in the road, slow to a crawling pace.

■ If you have a vehicle with four-wheel drive, don't get overconfident. The traction and force created by all four wheels driving instead of two helps you get going, but does not help you stop any faster or prevent skidding.

■ Running the engine on your driveway to demist the windows is sometimes essential, but don't leave it unattended. While you are not moving, turn off all unnecessary drains on the electrical system so the fans and heating elements can work more efficiently.

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range: Urban: 14.4 (19.6)-67.3 (4.2), Extra-urban: 27.4 (10.3)-91.1 (3.1), Combined: 20.6 (13.7)-80.7 (3.5). CO₂ emissions: 324-94g/km.

*Not available on Insignia, Zafira, VXR Tech & Tech Line models. **Finance is subject to Vauxhall Finance, a trading name of GMAC UK plc, P.O. Box 6666, Caxton, CF15 7YV. Finance is subject to status, terms and conditions. Applicants must be 18 years or over. Other applies to private individuals. Vauxhall Partners and small business leases 1-24 (part finance only) excluding 8200. All other customers are excluded. Offer available on orders in registrations before 2 April 2012. Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first registered keeper, 100,000 miles limit. Terms and conditions apply. *Customer deposit shown after deduction of Vauxhall Customer Deposit.